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NOTICE: FBIS wishes to advise that resource constraints will compel discontinuation of the Middle East and South Asia Review effective 1 April.

[Editorial Report]

PLO-U.S. Dialogue

Progress was made during the U.S.-PLO talks on 22 March as the two sides discussed fundamental issues in the peace process for the first time, PLO Executive Committee member Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh stated at a press conference reported by Tunis radio. He said the PLO told the Americans that an international conference is the "only framework" for a just and comprehensive settlement, noting that the Palestinian delegation submitted a number of ideas on preparations for a conference. Nevertheless, he added that such preparations can be preceded by "bilateral" meetings among the parties concerned and by meetings at the UN Security Council level.

In remarks cited by Baghdad Voice of the PLO radio, PLO Political Department chief Faruq Qaddumi said the U.S.-PLO dialogue should be "upgraded" and a high-level Palestinian delegation invited to Washington to talk to the U.S. secretary of state.

Israel

Finance Minister Shim'on Peres denied a HA'ARETZ report that he has formulated a plan for the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state, Jerusalem radio reported. The Labor leader stressed that he has never called for a Palestinian state, but pointed out that he does support a "federative solution" along the lines of the Benelux model. In another development, the radio broadcast remarks by Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin criticizing those in the Labor Party who support holding a dialogue with the PLO. This proposal will only cause damage to Labor, he contended.

In the territories, an 11-year-old boy was killed and 43 Palestinians were reported wounded in clashes with Israeli soldiers 22 March, according to THE JERUSALEM POST. Tel Aviv police cited by the paper THE NATION stated that the murder of an Israeli by an Arab in north Tel Aviv on 21 March was "politically motivated," making the victim the 17th Jew to be killed as a result of the intifadah (uprising).

Lebanon

Syrian artillery bombarded the eastern (Christian) areas with over 2,000 shells and rockets 22 March, causing considerable damage to property and wounding several people, Voice of Lebanon radio reported. The Lebanese Army retaliated by pinpointing and destroying four Syrian artillery emplacements and a Syrian military convoy heading for the Al-Matn area, the radio said. According to the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon, 8 members of the Syrian convoy were killed and 30 wounded. Ten members of the Progressive Socialist Party were also killed or injured when their rocket launcher was destroyed by fire from the Lebanese Army, the radio added.

Beirut radio subsequently reported that the combat lines in the capital were relatively calm 23 March, allowing the reopening of one crossing point in Beirut and of another at the northern edge of the Christian enclave. General Michel 'Awn, the prime minister in East Beirut, had earlier accused Syria of imposing a "siege" on the eastern area, according to the Voice of Lebanon. He stressed that there is no longer any way to coexist with the Syrians and that the only possible solution lies in their withdrawal from Lebanon.

Syria

French and Syrian viewpoints on the Lebanese crisis are "very close," Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' stated in remarks reported by Damascus television following a meeting with French President Francois Mitterrand in Paris. Both countries agree on the need for political reforms in Lebanon, he indicated. Al-Shar' noted that their talks also covered the Arab-Israeli conflict, and he maintained that French and Syrian stands are less far apart than depicted in Western media. According to AFP, the talks between Mitterrand and Al-Shar' gave a "significant boost" to Franco-Syrian relations.

A Syrian military source cited by Kuwait's AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM stated that the Syrian Navy fired two sea-to-sea missiles at two Israeli corvettes which entered Syrian territorial waters near Tartus early on 19 March. Syrian coastal artillery also confronted the two vessels, which returned fire and withdrew to international waters. Monitored Syrian and Israeli media have not mentioned the incident.

Egypt: Foreign Affairs

Soviet mediation between Egypt and Syria has achieved "tangible progress" and a meeting in Moscow between President Husni Mubarak and Syria's Hafiz al-Asad has been proposed, according to Cairo's AL-WAFD citing diplomatic sources. The paper noted that both Cairo and Damascus "welcomed" the USSR's efforts to reconcile the two countries.

On relations with Iran, AL-WAFD reported that Egypt has decided to "freeze" the question of Egyptian POW's until Iran and Iraq have agreed on a comprehensive exchange of POW's.

In another development, MENA reported that it has signed a cooperation agreement with the Iraqi news agency INA providing for an exchange of news materials and of "journalistic expertise."

Jordan

Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i announced that Jordan has decided to suspend negotiations on the purchase of eight British Tornado aircraft in light of the country's financial situation, Paris Radio Monte Carlo reported.

Sudan

The formation of a new government in which most of the ministerial posts will be held by the Ummah Party and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) was announced 22 March by Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi in a statement broadcast by Omdurman radio. Eight posts will go to the Ummah Party, six to the DUP, four to the southern parties, and the remainder to the trade unions and others, with no representation by the National Islamic Front. The ministers will be named after approval by the State Council, he declared.

As for the political situation in the south, Al-Mahdi dismissed the chairman and members of the Southern Council pending consultations on the formation of a new Council and of regional governments in the south, SUNA reported.

Iran

Tehran radio broadcast a message by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni on the birthday of the "Hidden Imam" in which he urged Iranian officials to "tighten their belts" and continue the "jihad" against the "corruption and vulgarity" of Western capitalism and the "futility and aggression" of communism. Claiming that both "East and West" have decided to "destroy" Islam in Iran, Khomeyni stressed that defense of Islam and Hezbollah (the party of God) is the "indisputable principle" of the Islamic Republic's existence. He also denounced "those who defend the liberals and the hypocrites."

On the Rushdie affair, Khomeyni asserted that "global arrogance" displayed its "resentment and enmity" toward Islam by mounting a "general mobilization" to defend the "sold-out mercenary author." He claimed that EC ambassadors are returning to Tehran in "shame, abjectness, and disgrace, regretting their deed." Khomeyni also denounced the ban on the veil in Turkish universities as another "distorted move" aimed at undermining Islam.

Afghanistan

Soviet Denial of POW Exchange—The Soviet ministries of defense and foreign affairs denied a WASHINGTON POST report that 70 Soviet POW's captured by the mujahidin were handed over to the USSR recently, Moscow radio reported in its World Service.

Najibullah Interview—The Afghan Government is confident that it can defend the country's eastern front, Pakistan's plan to capture Jalalabad has failed, and the food and security situation in Kabul is "satisfactory," President Najibullah declared in an interview broadcast by Kabul radio. Turning to the country's future, Najibullah affirmed that providing peace is restored, he would be willing to leave office and noted that there is an "important" role for all political personalities who seek peace, including former King Zahir Shah.

Pakistan

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has expanded the federal cabinet and reshuffled some posts, Islamabad radio reported.

Palestinian Affairs

PLO's Rabbuh Describes Talks With U.S.

LD2203194289 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Excerpts] After more than 5 hours of talks, the second round of the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue ended this evening. [passage omitted]

Mr Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh, leader of the Palestinian delegation to the dialogue with the U.S. Administration, stated that the PLO has stressed that an international peace conference is the only framework for a just and comprehensive settlement, and that the PLO has submitted a number of ideas on preparations for an international conference.

In a press conference held at the end of the second round of the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue, he stated that progress has been made in this meeting in that for the first time the fundamental issues related to the peace process in the Middle East have been discussed.

Mr 'Abd Rabbuh noted that preparations for an international conference can be preceeded by meetings at the level of the United Nations Security Council and bilateral meetings among the parties concerned with the Middle East issue. He pointed out that the continued occupation is the origin of tension. He indicated that any measures aimed at finding any settlement should first start with the confirmation of our people's right to self-determination and the edification of the independent state as well as bringing about an end to the occupation and its disappearance from Palestinian land.

During this second round of Palestinian-U.S. talks, the leader of the Palestinian delegation indicated that the intifadah [uprising], which was behind all these regional and international political changes, will continue until independence is achieved and until a Palestinian state is established on the land of Palestine.

Mr Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh reiterated the PLO's rejection of the so-called elections project. He said that the removal of the occupation is a necessary condition so that our people will be able to express a stance in total freedom.

Qaddumi Urges 'Upgraded' Talks

JN2203204389 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1919 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Brother Abu al-Lutf [Faruq Qaddumi], head of the PLO Political Department, has said that the United States must demand no concessions from the PLO. Brother Abu al-Lutf added that the issue of halting the intifadah [uprising] or asking the PLO to halt it is a prohibited matter, which must not be sought or requested. Brother Abu al-Lutf said that the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue is moving very slowly. He said this dialogue must be upgraded and a high-level Palestinian delegation invited to Washington to talk to the U.S. secretary of state.

PLO Source Responds to Abu Sharif Statements

JN2203194189 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1900 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Mar (WAKH)—The PLO affirmed anew here today its adherence to holding the international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to find a settlement establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

A trusted source in the PLO told the WAKH correspondent in Baghdad that the PLO does not accept any form other than the peace conference with the presence of the five permanent members and all the concerned parties, including the PLO, on an equal footing.

The source was responding to the statements of PLO Chairman's Information Advisor Bassam Abu Sharif in which he said that the PLO will accept substituting U.S. forces for Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories. The PLO will also accept U.S.-Soviet supervision in the peace talks.

The responsible source affirmed the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and establishing their state over their territory and realizing the full sovereignty.

PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat had affirmed yesterday that the popular intifadah [uprising] in the occupied territories will continue until the goals of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

He said that the latest Israeli criminal intensification will fail before the Palestinian masses' tide.

'Arafat Meets With West Bank Cadres in Iraq

JN2203091589 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1921 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] Brother leader Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] met with cadres from the occupied territories at his place of residence in fraternal Iraq this morning. He explained developments pertaining to the heroic intifadah [uprising] to them and ways to escalate it so as to confront the Zionist enemy's cycles of violence and terrorism in the current stage. Abu 'Ammar also explained the overall developments in our Palestinian struggle in the various local, Arab, and international arenas.

Abu 'Ammar added: The PLO, which is leading the Palestinian struggle, has been able to make three achievements, which are viewed as miracles: The first miracle is the start, escalation, and continuation of this blessed heroic intifadah, which all the enemy's methods have failed to quell over the past 16 months. The second miracle is the continuation of the heroic steadfastness of our Palestinian people and fighters in the Lebanese arena. The Zionist invasion, which took place in 1982, was intended to destroy the infrastructure of the PLO, including more than ½ million Palestinians in Lebanon. But the heroic steadfastness of our people and fighters aborted all the goals of the Zionist invasion. Our camps in Lebanon remain steadfast, and our fighters' bases continue to fight the Zionist enemy in the longest war of attrition against the Zionist occupation. The third miracle is the strength and firmness of our Palestinian national unity on the level of all our people's factions and sectors inside and outside the occupied territories as well our Palestinian frameworks under the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of our people. We have been able to achieve our national unity in this splendid manner despite all the plots in which many sides participated to harm this unity.

Brother leader Abu 'Ammar said: For us there is no limit to our support for the blessed heroic intifadah. In other words, all requirements for the continuation and escalation of the intifadah should be secured regardless of the costs, and this intifadah should continue, continue and escalate until our goals of liberation, independence, and the establishment of our independent state are achieved. Abu 'Ammar added: The declaration of Palestinian independence issued by the 19th session of the Palestine National Council is one of our people's most important resolutions because it constitutes a beginning of the real confrontation of the Zionist project on the land of Palestine itself. No one can succeed in distorting such achievements under the heroic intifadah by casting doubts about it or through current war secenarios intended to distract attention from the intifadah and give time to the enemy to deal its blows to the intifadah under the cover of an uproar over war scenarios, which are being planned by the Zionist enemy and some other sides. Brother leader Abu 'Ammar gave instructions to the cadres of the occupied territories on the need to continue efforts to develop and escalate the intifadah until victory.

Islamic Jihad Issues 'Declaration of Disavowal'

JN2203191189 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1700 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Excerpts] The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine issued a declaration of disavowal over all those bargaining over the holy land, parts of which follow: [passage omitted]

O masses of the intifadah [uprising], masses of generous sacrifice and offering, the Islamic Jihad Movement continues, with you and through you, the march of the challenge of civilization with the title to be or not to be and our homeland—Palestine—to be as we know it and it knows us, from the river to the sea, or not to be. We declare on the commemoration of disavowal the following:

First, we affirm our continuation of the policy of martyrdom chosen by our people to effect a complete break from the reality of the occupation, to rebel against it, and continue the blessed intifadah against it.

Second, let God be our witness that we will reject any bargaining over our right to our full homeland or preparing to forfeit one inch of our holy land.

Third, let God be our witness that we will reject any call for what is termed elections, conference, or any formulation that might lead those in the right to the curse of having to concede their rights.

Fourth, let God be our witness that we reject any attempt the objective of which is to contain or abort the intifadah of our people. We also draw the attention of our people to be aware of the satanic U.S. attempts proposed on this issue.

[Fifth] Let God be our witness that we have nothing to do with the traitors and agents. We call on our people to fight them with force and confront them with an iron fist.

Sixth, let God be our witness that we fully reject any attempt aiming to disintegrate the unity of our people and weaken their closeness in the trench of confrontation with the enemy.

[Signed] The Islamic Jihad Movement, Jerusalem

Islamic Resistance Movement Issues Call No 38

JN2103194889 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] The Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine—Hamas, has issued statement No 38 to mark the anniversaries of the battle of Karamah and Land Day, which will be celebrated on 30 March.

The statement says: When justice and unity are displayed, God will bless the efforts and bring relief and a happy outcome. The enemy used to portray its army as possessing mythical powers. However, this enemy left its dead in the battlefield in Karamah. Besides, it also left many of its tanks, whose occupants were bound in chains there. Jihad is the only guarantee of liberation. As for negotiations and begging states, these will enable the enemy to display further preparedness and arrogance.

The date 30 March marks the Land Day anniversary. If people adhere to their soil, we, the Palestinians, ought to be the most eager of all to safeguard this sacred soil, which has been under the yoke of the usurper's occupation for more than 40 years.

The statement issued by the Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine—Hamas—hails our kinfolk in Palestine and called for carrying out the following activities:

1. People must observe a fast on Thursday, 23 March 1989 and must perform prayers throughout the night of Friday [24 March].

2. A general strike must be observed on Thursday, 30 March, on the occasion of the Land Day anniversary.

3. People must continue to boycott Zionist industrial and agricultural commodities. In this regard, we lay emphasis on the boycott of foodstuffs, fruits, vegetables, and particularly watermelons. There has been an influx of watermelons into our local markets these days at exorbitant prices when our kinfolk are being prevented from marketing their products with the aim of imposing restrictions on their means of livelihood. The strike teams are authorized to follow up the implementation of this.

4. Educational committees must resume their activities at mosques and homes in response to the closure of educational institutions.

5. We must ascertain the honesty and incorruptibility of donation collectors. Besides this, we must make sure that their papers and stamps are not forged.

In conclusion, the statement issued by the Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine—Hamas—calls for demonstrating eagerness to coordinate and unify efforts and to brush aside disunity and differences with the aim of liberating Palestine, all of Palestine. It also calls for not not ceding one grain of its soil. Let the intifadah [uprising] continue, with God's help, until God brings a happy outcome, the dignity of the nation is vindicated, and Palestinian territory is liberated.

[Signed] The Islamic Resistance Movement—Hamas—Palestine.

Labor Group Changes PLO Name to Palestine

NC1703132689 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1300 GMT 17 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—The Board of Directors of the International Labor Organization [ILO] has agreed to change the name of the PLO in the organization to Palestine.

This was stated today by Hasan 'Id, member of the board for Egypt, who said that Egypt had presented a proposal to this effect to the board during its last meeting in Geneva. During that meeting, it was decided by a consensus vote to list the name as Palestine.

Egypt

Mubarak To Begin Washington Visit 1 Apr

JN2203182789 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 21 Mar 89 p 3

[By Hamdi Fu'ad]

[Excerpt] Washington—An official source at the Egyptian Embassy in the U.S. capital has stated that Saturday, 1 April, has been fixed as the date for President Husni Mubarak's visit to Washington. President Mubarak will meet with President George Bush on Monday, 3 April, in the first official meeting between the two presidents since the Tokyo meeting, to discuss important developments relating to the Middle East problem and the Palestine question. The meeting will come in a decisive stage to move the peace process and after the deepening of the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue.

President Mubarak will be accompanied by an official Egyptian delegation comprising Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, Dr Usamah al-Baz, and a number of senior officials. He will leave Cairo on 31 March and spend a day in London, where he will meet with Mrs Thatcher prior to his visit to Washington. President Mubarak is expected to leave Washington for Egypt on 15 April. [passage omitted]

Seminar Calls For Pro-Israeli Dialogue

NC2003143289 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1248 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—A seminar was held today in Cairo to mark the 10 years that have passed since Egypt and Israel signed the peace accords. Participants in the seminar stressed the importance of opening a dialogue between the PLO, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and Israel to facilitate the achievement of a lasting, just, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The participants agreed that the return of Tabah to Egypt is an important development. It has removed a stumbling block that impeded the naturalization of relations between the two countries despite the signing of peace accords 10 years ago.

The participants also concluded that the repressive measures of Israel in the West Bank and Gaza, and the inability of the Palestinians to excercise their legitimate right to self-determination affect the course of naturalizing Egyptian-Israeli relations. In this context, Dr Butrus Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, underlined that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that Israel has to negotiate with that organization.

Participants in the seminar also voiced the belief that all those concerned with the Middle East conflict should exert great efforts to consolidate peace in the region.

'Ezer Weizmann, Israel's minister of science and research, said at the seminar that the peace process started by late President Anwar al-Sadat is continuing under President Husni Mubarak. Weizmann pointed out that the return of Tabah to Egypt will open a new leaf in the history of the region.

Israeli peace advocate, Abi Nathan, said that it will be very difficult for a direct dialogue between the PLO and Israel not to be establshed, voicing the belief that peace between Egypt and Israel will endure despite any pressure.

Participating in the seminar on the Egyptian side were Dr Butrus Ghali and Dr Mustafa Khalil, deputy chairman for external communications of the National Democratic Party. Representing the Israeli side was 'Ezer Weizmann, who arrived in Cairo yesterday. Other Egyptian and Israeli journalists, authors, academicians, and businessmen also took part in the seminar, which was arranged by the BBC. That organization had held a seminar 10 years ago with almost all of the same participants attending. A third seminar will be held in Jerusalem this week.

Mubarak Grants Interview to Israeli Journalists

NC2203185789 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1800 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 22 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has stressed that peace is important to the Egyptian people and to the Israelis. He called on the Israelis to sit at the negotiating table to reach a solution to the Arab-Israeli struggle and end the acts of violence in the occupied Arab territories. President Mubarak expressed surprise at the Israelis' fear of sitting with the Palestinians at the negotiating table. He pointed out that the Palestinians have renounced terrorism, and the overwhelming majority of Palestinians are against terrorism.

President Mubarak described PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat as most moderate. The president called on Israel to try to work for the sake of peace so that the cycle of struggle and violence will end, and so that the citizens can live in peace and security.

The president's statements were made today during his meeting with a number of Israeli journalists. In his statements, President Mubarak reiterated his call for discarding violence and for cooperating for the sake of positive developments. He noted that the struggle in the area has been and is still going on for the past 40 years. He added that the struggle will continue if Israel persists in its stubbornness.

Asked if Israel calls for a dialogue with the PLO, would Egypt encourage it to forge ahead in its efforts, President Mubarak said: The Palestinians are human beings and have their own land, and we must sit with them at the negotiating table. But the Israeli Government refuses to do this.

President Mubarak continued: As a man true to the cause and one who cherishes peace I call on Israel to avoid maneuvers and evasions so that we do not lose more lives and property. He pointed out that Israel will eventually sit with the PLO at the negotiating table.

President Mubarak said: I want the two sides to live in peace and dignity. I wonder why do you refuse to sit with the PLO? He said that there are extremist elements in both the PLO and Israel, but the majority of these is moderate.

President Mubarak reaffirmed that the international conference is a psychological umbrella under which a meeting of five to six states would be held. The conference, he added, would then be divided into negotiation groups and each party will cooperate with the other.

President Mubarak asked: Is it logical to spend money on missiles and destructive and annihilation weapons and not on construction, investment, stability, and security? He said that what was happening now is a murder of future generations.

The president emphasized that there could be no solution without the PLO, that the PLO is everywhere, and that it wants a solution and negotiations.

The president pointed out in this regard that what the Arabs rejected in the past, the Israelis are rejecting now. He asked: Will we continue to say yes and Israel continue to say no for the next 40 years?

President Mubarak called upon Israel to approve the holding of the peace conference, cut short the road to the negotiations, and take reality into consideration.

Asked if a meeting between himself and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir would surmount the difficulties obstructing the convening of the international conference, President Mubarak said: I offered to visit Mr Shamir if this would help solve the issue, but his answer was no to the international conference.

President Mubarak added: We must live with the present reality until we find the solution. There are some problems and psychological aspects and what is required is the umbrella—the international conference—which all the world approves.

Asked if the United States could mediate, President Mubarak said: The Americans will not exert pressure on Egypt or on Israel, but they are working to bring the points of view closer.

Mubarak renewed his call to seize the golden peace opportunity this year saying there must be a move toward peace. He warned against missing this opportunity.

In his statements, the president said: Rather than cooperating in waging war against each other, let us cooperate in making peace. Let us seize this golden opportunity. If we do not exploit it, we would be committing a horrible mistake against the right of our people.

President Mubarak demanded the Israeli side to show flexibility and an understanding of the reality, discard the old illusions, and live with the present reality so that we may not live another 40-year period of ruination to the country and citizens.

'Abd al-Majid on Relations With Israel

NC2103045989 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1937 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—Egypt has announced that it welcomes the expected visit to Cairo of King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia. Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has stated that this visit comes within the framework of the constant consultations between the two Arab leaders, President Mubarak and King Fahd.

Speaking to correspondents of foreign news agencies in Cairo this evening, Dr 'Abd al-Majid said that Egypt is passing through an important period, noting that President Husni Mubarak has stated that Egypt is working to achieve a comprehensive and permanent peace in the area. Dr 'Abd al-Majid referred in this regard to President Mubarak's expected visit to the United States for consultations with U.S. President George Bush.

Dr 'Abd al-Majid said that some positive elements which have appeared in the area will help achieve this peace. These include the Palestinian National Council's resolutions, the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue, and the United States' readiness to listen and discuss. This is in addition to the existence of public opinion in Israel which supports dialogue with the PLO. It is necessary to underline and build on these positive elements in order to achieve peace in the area, he said.

Dr 'Abd al-Majid praised the Palestinian intifadah [uprising] in the occupied Arab territories, affirming that no one can stop the intifadah, and that 20 years of Israeli occupation could not end Palestinian resistance.

Dr 'Abd al-Majid expressed hope that a political solution leading to stability in the Middle East will be reached. He reaffirmed that the intifadah will not stop until the Palestinian people regain their legitimate rights.

He said that peace is in the interest of the Palestinians just as it is in the interest of Israel, and that violence will only lead to violence.

Dr 'Abd al-Majid explained that Egypt supports the convening of an international conference for peace in the Middle East, noting that the conference cannot impose a solution on anyone. It is just a way to hold direct negotiations. Israel's fear of such a conference is unjustified.

Speaking about Egyptian-Israeli relations, Dr 'Abd al-Majid said that these relations are good. Egypt has received the Israeli foreign minister, he said, and he himself had met with him in Paris not long ago. Egypt's disapproval of some of the Israeli positions, particulary Israel's practices in the occupied territories, does not mean that relations are not good. He expressed the belief that these relations will develop positively, particularly after the settlement of the Tabah problem. He noted that these relations could develop further if there were some movement in the peace process and the violence in the occupied territories ended.

Dr 'Abd al-Majid explained that Egypt has discussed these issues candidly and explicitly with Israel. When we say "peace" this is not a gift from Israel to the Arabs, he said, adding that peace is very important to Israel, just as it is important to the Palestinians and to everyone else in this area.

Dr 'Abd al-Majid affirmed that the new U.S. Administration understands the situation in the Middle East.

Regarding the economic situation in Egypt, he affirmed that Egypt has taken numerous measures to correct the economic course. He expressed hope that the IMF would understand the Egyptian position and the special social and economic circumstances in Egypt.

Dr 'Abd al-Majid praised the understanding which the European Community showed toward the Egyptian position in light of the talks which President Mubarak held during his recent tour.

Finally, Dr 'Abd al-Majid affirmed that Egypt's goal is peace, and it will always work for its achievement, for a better future for all the parties in the area and for the entire world.

Israel's Weizman, Al-Baz on Bilateral Relations

TA2103125089 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1000 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Excerpt] Minister 'Ezer Weizman conferred with Dr Usamah al-Baz, President Mubarak's adviser, for the second time this morning in Cairo in anticipation of Weizman's scheduled meeting with the Egyptian president. The two men discussed the future of bilateral relations following the settlement of the Tabah issue and they also touched on ways to solve the Palestinian problem. Our correspondent Aharon Barne'a reports that an agreement was reached on an exchange of scientists between Israel and Egypt. [passage omitted]

21 Mar Holiday Marks Return of Tabah

NC1803064489 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0500 GMT 18 Mar 89

[Text] It has been decided that this Tuesday, 21 March, will be a holiday for all state employees, marking the celebrations for the return of Tabah to the mother country Egypt, according to Prime Minister Dr 'Atif Sidqi. He added that this holiday will be observed this year only and that, since Tabah is part of Egyptian territory, 25 April will remain the official holiday marking the liberation of the Egyptian soil.

Information Minister on Extremist Groups

JN1903163389 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 16 Mar 89 pp 1, 13

[By 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Yarqani and Kamal 'Abd al-Jabir]

[Excerpt] Interior Minister Zaki Badr yesterday asserted that President Muhammad Husni Mubarak does not permit deviation or silence over deviation. The minister appealed to citizens to quickly notify judicial authorities once any deviation is discovered because no one is above the law. Badr announced this while inspecting the fair of stolen objects seized by the Al-Jizah secret police in the past 5 months and estimated at approximately 4 million pounds.

The minister added that the opposition newspapers try to distort the police image and disseminate tendentious rumors. They also attack the interior minister, claiming that he does not implement the orders of the judicial authorities. These papers ignore the fact that judicial orders are sacred and should be respected and that the interior minister is not above the law. It is due to the democratic atmosphere the country is enjoying that we operate through the sovereignty of law, he added.

The minister urged citizens not to listen to the rumors disseminated by some tendentious people and by the extremists and the opposition. He pointed to reports published by some opposition papers to the effect that he prevented the prime minister from laying the cornerstone of a project and that there are suits brought under the supervision of the prime minister and the education minister to remove offenses made against them. He said this did not happen.

Interior Minister Zaki Badr said the extremist groups with all their factions have cases before courts to be considered. The minister added that some tendentious ones among the extremists try to create chaos and hide behind late leader Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir's name claiming they are Nasirites. In fact, they have nothing to do with the late leader and only try to exploit his name to achieve their interests. The minister said: We should respect the history of our country's rulers so we will be people with manners. He wondered: Is it logical that the opposition parties go to Libya to commemorate 'Abd al-Nasir's anniversary there? In fact, they went there to obtain money and to abuse Egypt. Badr added: When late President Al-Sadat assumed power, Al-Qadhdhafi claimed that Al-Sadat concealed 'Abd al-Nasir's will on Al-Qadhdhafi assuming power in Egypt. The mad one [Al-Qadhdhafi] still dreams of achieving what he claimed, Badr said. The minister also talked about those who try to exploit Islam to establish capital investment companies. [passage omitted]

Al-Minya Governor on Islamic Groups

JN1503115589 Cairo AL-NUR in Arabic 15 Feb 89 p 9

[By Ahmad 'Abd al-'Aziz]

[Text] Al-Minya these days rarely enjoys tranquility because of the continuing clashes between the Islamic groups and the police, which continue to besiege mosques, schools, and the university. In our search for a language of reason and logic amid these clashes, I went to Al-Minya Governor Major General 'Abd al-Tawwab Rashwan to explore his views on the continuation of this phenomenon, on extremism and its motivations, on his initiative to deal with the issue, and on the governorate's role in religious enlightenment. We were surprised by Maj Gen 'Abd al-Tawwab Rashwan's insistence on confronting the Islamic groups, believing that resoluteness is the only way to deal with them. He declared his total rejection of anything called an Islamic group. He also rejected any mediation between him and the group, saying that there is no use in talking to the Islamists and that the storming of the mosques by the security forces was intended to arrest those who were planning to attack security men.

I first asked Maj Gen 'Abd al-Tawwab Rashwan about the continuous siege of mosques in Al-Minya.

He said: We, as security men, not only react to incidents, but take action. Therefore, we take precautions and besiege the places of crime in advance. When my sources of information advise me to besiege these mosques, I besiege them just as I prepare an ambush for thieves.

['Abd al-'Aziz] But the security forces storm these mosques many times?

[Rashwan] When there is intention to commit a crime. For example, when someone enters the mosque carrying bricks and stones, I storm the mosque and arrest him. In general, these are individual cases.

['Abd al-'Aziz] Who is the extremist in your view?

[Rashwan] He is the narrow-minded man, who imagines things that do not exist in society. He is the one who has his own interpretation of the religious laws. For example, someone comes and says: He who sees a deplorable deed should correct it. Another comes and says: Approach not prayers instead of saying: Approach not prayers with a mind befogged [Koranic verse]. By this he tries to give whatever meaning he wishes. I say to these people: Why are you trying to prevent crimes with your own hands? The ruler is the one that shoulders this responsibility. Frankly, using resoluteness and force against these people is the best way to deal with them. Therefore, we watch them and strike at them before they do anything. As I said, we not only react to but initiate action. We have no choice but to act resolutely and use force. Tell me, a dialogue with whom? Is it with their leaders, who escaped and left the governorate?

['Abd al-'Aziz] Will you hold a dialogue with them if they return?

[Rashwan] Why? The dialogue with them has failed. They are like drug dealers. The drug dealer exposes himself to death to make gains by destroying young men. Similarly, these extremists expose themselves to death by giving religious doses to young men to destroy them. The aim is the same: To destroy young men in different ways. What we are trying to do is to deal with people attracted by these groups. Therefore, we form certain groups in schools, and each group is completely affiliated to one of the teachers, who knows the names of the students in his group, their economic conditions, and their social circumstances. We began applying this system in schools and universities in Al-Minya.

['Abd al-'Aziz] I have heard that the Shari'a society tried to mediate between the Islamic group and the security organs to calm the situation. What did it achieve?

[Rashwan] I reject such mediation. I also reject the word "mediation". These young men have fathers and a state which regulates their way of life. These young people must be committed to the state and must not deviate from its laws and regulations.

['Abd al-'Aziz] Since you reject any mediation with them, then a third party like the Shari'a society is communicating their ideas and opinions to you?

[Rashwan] I reject this mediation and this course of action. I would like to repeat that they must abide by the laws of the country in which they live.

['Abd al-'Aziz] Then how do you propose settling this problem?

[Rashwan] I am ready to respond to all that these young people want through requests they may submit to the governorate to participate in productive projects, and cultivating the land. I am ready to respond to their requests in these fields. But I refuse to have them become a force within the state. I also refuse to have a grouping which acts under the name of an Islamic group.

['Abd al-'Aziz] Do you not believe that the implementation of Islamic law could be a solution that will satisfy all the parties?

[Rashwan] Islamic law is fully implemented in our country. A hue and cry must not be raised over some aspects of this law which are not implemented, for example, the provisions on usury. Muslim scholars have not yet reached a consensus on what exactly constitutes usury and to what it applies. Therefore, there is no need for one-upmanship and stupid actions.

['Abd al-'Aziz] If, for the sake of argument, I agree with you on this point, what about the other aspects, such as alcoholic drinks and punishments?

[Rashwan] These are simple matters. There is a Koranic verse which says: Obey God, the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you. [Koranic verse]. As a citizen, you cannot be blamed or held responsibile. The entire responsibility falls upon the shoulders of the ruler. Citizens must obey their rulers. In spite of this, the state is proceeding with the implementation of the Islamic law.

['Abd al-'Aziz] Is there an order on closing shops which sell alcoholic drinks in Al-Minya similar to what has taken place in other governorates?

[Rashwan] Yes, there was an order issued 2 years ago. But the truth is that it was not an order. It was a popular wish expressed through local councils. We do not pay too much attention to shopowners who protest against this measure. We also do not prevent any person from drinking alcohol. Those who wish to do so are free. We serve alcoholic drinks at tourist sites and establishments.

['Abdal-'Aziz] What about religious enlightenement in the governorate?

[Rashwan] This is basically carried out in mosques. We always guide sermon preachers, irrespective of their affiliations, to preach sound morals and steer young people toward production. We also hold many political seminars in schools, universities, plants, and establishments which include religious lectures. This is all in addition to the activities carried out by the local press, the information centers, and the youth organizations in the governorate.

Libya

Agreement Signed with Pakistan on Manpower

BK2203040089 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] An agreement has been signed between Pakistan and Libya under which Libya will give priority to Pakistani manpower when needed. The agreement was signed by the federal minister of labor, Mr Mukhtar Ahmad Awan, and the Libyan minister for petroleum, Fawzi Shakshuki, in Tripoli.

The Pakistani labor minister also met with Libyan Foreign Minister Jadallah 'Azzuz al-Talhi and informed him that Pakistan attaches great importance to close and fraternal relations with all Islamic countries. The Libyan foreign minister said there is understanding between the two countries on the question of manpower. The Pakistani delegation has now arrived in Abu Dhabi.

Joint Committee Session With Sweden Opens

LD2003102289 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0715 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] Misratah, 20 Mar (JANA)—The 7th session of the joint Libyan Arab-Swedish committee opened yesterday evening in Misratah. The secretary of the people's committee for strategic industries and George Andersson, the Swedish transport and communications minister attended the session. The committee will examine ways to boost cooperation between the two friendly countries in all fields.

Cooperation Agreement Signed

LD2203174289 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1500 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Tripoli, 22 Mar (JANA)—An agreement on cooperation was signed this morning between the great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahariyah and Sweden. The agreement was signed by brother secretary of the general people's committee for strategic industries and George Andersson, Swedish minister of transport and communications.

The agreement provides for cooperation in the field of exchanges in trade, finance, economy, industry, technology, maritime wealth, telecommunications, vocational training, and futurist industries. The agreement also stipulates the desire for the development of economic, industrial, and technological cooperation between the great Jamahiriyah and Sweden, and to benefit from experience in programs of women's vocational training, especially those related to rural development, and the consolidation of the prospects of future cooperation in all fields.

Swedish Minister Departs

LD2203174789 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1505 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Tripoli, 22 Mar (JANA)—George Andersson, the Swedish minister of transport and communications, left Tripoli this afternoon following a visit to the great Jamahiriyah during which he had many meetings and talks for the consolidation and development of bilateral cooperation in the field of transport and communications.

Niger President Saibou Arrives on Visit

LD2103155189 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1434 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Excerpt] Surt, 21 Mar (JANA)—Brigadier General Ali Saibou, president of the Niger Supreme Military Council and president of the republic, arrived this afternoon in the municipality of the Gulf of Sidra on an official visit to the great Jamahiriyah. The Niger president was accorded a warm welcome with the brother leader of the revolution at the forefront of the welcoming delegation. [passage omitted]

Makes Arrival Statement

LD2103195489 Tripoli JANA in English 1638 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Excerpts] Surt, Al-Mirrikh [March] 21, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—Brigadier Ali Saibou, chairman of the Supreme Military Council and president of Niger has arrived in the Gulf of Sidra municipality this afternoon on a visit to great Jamahiriyah. A massive people's welcome was conducted for him. [passage omitted]

President Ali Saibou gave a statement to journalists at the beginning of which he said: You well know that Jamahiriyah and Niger are two neighbouring sisterly countries linked by fraternal relations based on cooperation and mutual respect through dialogue and under the sovereignty of each country. He added: It is very natural that after a year of presidency in my country that I visit a sisterly neighbouring country. Also I convey all our wishes to live in harmony and full accord with all neighbouring countries.

In his statement, President Saibou expressed full gratitude for visiting great Jamahiriyah and for the close cooperation between the two countries indicating that his visit was inspired by the desire of Niger to be open for the purpose of establishing a fruitful cooperation with all neighbouring countries. He asserted that the negotiations and talks he is to hold in Jamahiriyah would be within the framework of the bilateral cooperation and tackle many bilateral and international matters of mutual interest. The president of Niger concluded his statement by conveying the greetings of the people of Niger to its brother the Libyan Arab people. [passage omitted]

Confers With Al-Qadhdhafi

LD2103155789 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1447 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] Surt, 21 Mar (JANA)—This afternoon, the brother leader of the revolution and Niger president Brigadier General Ali Saibou held private talks.

Attends Banquet 21 Mar

LD2203094989 Tripoli JANA in English 0842 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Surt, Al-Mirikh [March] 22, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of revolution gave last night a banquet in honour of Brigadier Ali Saibou, chairman of the Supreme Military Council and president of Niger. Present at this banquet were also the secretary of the General People's Congress, the secretary and members of the General People's Committee and the accompanying delegation of President Saibou.

'Elated' With Visit

LD2203223489 Tripoli JANA in English 1745 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Surt, Al-Mirrikh [March] 22, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—Brigadier Ali Saibou the chairman of the Military Supreme Council and the president of the Republic of Niger gave JANA's envoy a statement at the beginning of which he said:

"I just have ended a working and a friendship visit to the Libyan Arab soil. This visit comes within the framework of the contacts amongst our neighbouring and friendly states. I and my delegation had actually felt extremely happy and joyous for the good reception and the hospitality we received. This visit enabled us to reactivate the links of friendship and cooperation that exist between great Jamahiriyah and Niger. I found with my Brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi a sincere desire for a frank and fruitful cooperation in this respect. I can say that I feel grateful and starting here, I reaffirm that Niger always endeavours to accomplish good relations with all its friends, especially its neighbouring states."

President Ali Saibou asserted that the two countries' bilateral relations will be activated and backed through the joint Libyan Arab-Niger committee. "In the end I return to my country very grateful for the outcome of this visit I also feel fully elated." He saluted the leader of the revolution and the Libyan Arab people for the reception and the hospitality he and his accompanying delegation received. And on a question about the establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union, President Ali Saibou said: "You know well that we followed with extreme interest the establishment of the union of the Arab Maghreb states—which is a merger measure for African economy.

"At the beginning of 1992, there is going to be a European union, as a result it becomes an inevitable necessity for the African states to feel more than anytime before the importance to be united and it is in our interest that there is a united stand to defend our products. In the end I believe this deed is [word indistinct] taken and we bless it."

Joint Statement Issued

LD2203222889 Tripoli Television Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] A joint press statement was issued today at the conclusion of the visit by Major General [as heard] Ali Saibou. This pointed out that the two leaders had important and useful talks in an atmosphere of fraternity, friendship, and complete understanding. The talks addressed brotherly relations between the two countries and African and international issues of mutual interest.

On this occasion, the two leaders expressed utmost satisfaction with the similarity of views on all issues on the agenda. The two sides stressed their commitment to the principles of the OAU Charter, the UN Charter, the principles of the Nonaligned Movement and the Islamic Conference. They also expressed their determination to work toward the consolidation of the OAU, which represents a framework for dialogue and consultation, in order to find solutions to African problems and the strengthen security and stability in it [the African continent]. The two sides also emphasized their commitment to the principles of South-South cooperation and African cooperation, and they expressed satisfaction with the continuing and positive development in Maghreb relations and the new directions being witnessed by these relations in the framework of the Arab Maghreb Union. This union, they stressed, opens new prospects for understanding, peace, and stability for the states of the region. It is an important step toward the consolidation of Arab-African solidarity.

The two sides stressed that peace cannot be established in the Arab region without the withdrawal of the Zionist entity from the occupied Arab territories, recognition of the rights of the Palestinian Arab people, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

In analyzing the situation in southern Africa, the two sides strongly condemned the policy of apartheid and colonialist influence of the minority regime in Pretoria. They renewed their complete solidarity and unconditional support for the African National Congress, the Pan-African Congress, and the Frontline States which are struggling against apartheid.

Concerning Namibia, the two leaders renewed their support for SWAPO and called upon the international community to guarantee the implementation of the measures leading to the independence of Namibia.

President Ali Saibou issued an invitation to his brother, Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the great September revolution, to undertake an official and fraternal visit to the Republic of Niger. It was gratefully accepted, and the date will be fixed at a later date.

Al-Qadhdhafi Receives Togo Minister, Message

LD2003235589 Tripoli Television Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] The brother leader of the revolution received Koffi Djondo, minister of industry and state enterprises, and envoy of President Eyadema of the Republic of Togo, who handed the leader a written message from President Eyadema, concerning bilateral relations. The meeting was attended by the brother secretary of the people's committee of the people's bureau for foreign liaison and international cooperation.

Togo Minister Departs

LD2103215389 Tripoli JANA in English 1807 GMT 21 Mar 89

[text] Tripoli, Al-Mirrikh [March] 21, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—Mr Koffi Djondo, minister of state enterprises and industry in Togo has left Tripoli after concluding his visit to great Jamahiriyah. He left this morning.

Mauritania

Egypt's Ghali Arrives, Comments on Visit

LD2203224389 Nouakchott Domestic Service in Arabic 2030 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Excerpts] Dr Butrus Ghali, Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs, arrived in Nouakchott this evening. He is carrying a message from Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak to Colonel Maaouiya Ould Sid Ahmed Taya, chairman of the Military Committee for National Salvation and head of state. [passage omitted]

In the VIP lounge at the airport Dr Butrus Ghali answered journalists' questions about the purpose of his visit.

[Begin Ghali recording] The purpose of the visit to my second homeland, Mauritania, is to deliver a message from the president of the Republic of Egypt to the president of the Republic of Mauritania. It is a message of solidarity and brotherhood. The purpose of my visit is also to discuss with my colleagues and ministers means to work toward invigorating relations between the two fraternal countries. [passage indistinct] [end recording]

In response to a question on peace efforts in the Middle East and the Egyptian move aimed at convening the Middle East peace conference, the Egyptian minister of state said:

[Begin Ghali recording] Egyptian diplomacy supports the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and it works to enable these people to exercise their right to self-determination. We are trying to contact the major powers—the United States of America; the Soviet Union; the European Community—so that these states move to hold an international conference within the UN framework. We believe that through this international conference we can get the Palestinian issue out of its deadlock. In addition to this, on 15 November the PLO recognized the Israeli state and the time has now come for Israel to recognize the PLO. This is the Egyptian position. [passage indistinct]

We support regional blocs because they are the route to complete unity and whether it is the Maghreb bloc which brought together Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania; or the Arab Cooperation Council, which brought together Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Yemen, these blocs (?are formed for the same reason), namely to strengthen (?the work of) Arab unity and to [words indistinct]. [passage indistinct]

Morocco

Joint Egyptian Commission Holds 2d Session

Laraki, Sidqi Confer

LD2203145289 Rabat MAP in English 1202 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Rabat, Mar 22, (MAP)—The second session of the Moroccan-Egyptian commission started here Tuesday under the chairmanship of the two countries prime ministers Atif Sidqi and Azeddine Laraki to discuss issues relating to bilateral cooperation.

In an address to the occasion, Laraki highlighted the secular ties between Egypt and Morocco and the key role played by Egypt in defending the interests of the Arab and Islamic nation. He added that the meeting of the commission takes part after two great events namely the creation of the Union of the Arab Maghreb (UMA) and the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) which will enable reinforced Arab unity.

On his part, the president of the Egyptian Ministerial Council said his country is determined to enhance cooperation between Morocco and Egypt adding that the UMA, the ACC and the Gulf Cooperation Council will contribute to achieve complementarity between Arab countries.

The preparatory works of the commission held March 17 to 20 signed a minutes on a wide range of recommendations aiming at the bolstering of cooperation in trade exchanges, industrial coordination, investments, transports, mining and energy as well as education and culture. The Moroccan and Egyptian delegations to the preparatory meeting also drew up draft accords in trade and tariffs, investments, maritime transport, and legal assistance. The accords are to be signed this Wednesday [22 March] by the commission.

Economic, Trade Accords Signed

NC2203212189 Cairo MENA in English 2055 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Rabat, March 22 (MENA)—The meetings of the Joint Egyptian-Moroccan Higher Committee wound up here tonight with the two sides agreeing on a draft project of a holding company between the two countries with a capital of 50 million dollars, to be based in Rabat. It was also agreed to conclude a tripartite agreement between Egypt, Morocco and third parties for the joint work in various economic and technical fields inside and outside the two countries.

The joint Egyptian-Moroccan committee signed a number of agreements with the aim of stepping up bilateral cooperation in various fields. The agreements covered trade exchange between the two countries within the framework of the barter deal, agricultural cooperation and joint industrial ventures. The agreements also dealt with cooperation in the fields of electricity, transport, tourism and civil aviation. The Egyptian-Moroccan higher committee concluded agreements on education, culture, Islamic affairs, health and youths and sports.

Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. Atif Sidqi and his Moroccan counterpart Dr. Azzedine Laraki presided over the second session of the Joint Egyptian-Moroccan Higher Committee.

Hassan Receives Spanish Defense Minister

LD2203164689 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] At the Royal Palace in Marrakech this afternoon, His Majesty King Hassan II, may god make him victorious, received Spanish Defense Minister General Narciso Serra, who is visiting Morocco. The meeting was attended by Gen Achebare, secretary general of the Department of National Defense.

Commerce Minister Meets USSR, CSSR Envoys

LD2203145989 Rabat MAP in English 1221 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Rabat, Mar 22, (MAP)—Moroccan Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdallah Azmani separately conferred here with the ambassadors of the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Belgium on cooperation and relations between Morocco and their respective countries.

The Moroccan and Soviet officials tackled the possibility of enhancing cooperation between the two countries through the holding of information days with the collaboration of trade chambers and professional organizations.

The Belgian ambassador and Azmani agreed to convene a working meeting next April 5 to identify fields of cooperation in trade, industry and finance.

Czech-Moroccan cooperation was tackled by Azmani and the Czech ambassador [noted] especially that Czech Minister of Trade and Tourism Nagy Kazimir is to pay a visit to Morocco soon to discuss the means to materialize the recommendations of the third session of the two countries's joint commission.

Sudan

Al-Mahdi Holds News Conference 22 Mar

EA2303131089 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Statement by Premier al-Sadiq al-Mahdi at a press conference held at the Grand Hall of the Council of Ministers in Khartoum on 22 March—live or recorded]

[Excerpts] [Al-Mahdi] [passage omitted] The second point which I would like to discuss with you is connected with the lists of arms published recently in AL-KHARTOUM newspaper. I want to clarify the question of these arms. They were owned by the Popular Resistance Front and arrived in the country last September. Since then the situation has been watched by the authorities—the police. It has become clear that some of these arms were at one time in the possession of the Ethiopian Government. Some of them were buried in different places. Some were actually handed over to the Armed Forces and some were traded in by their owners. These people were arrested, interrogated and are now awaiting trial. The matter was kept under observation by the police and investigations are in progress.

What I would like to clarify, therefore, is that this question is not a new one. It is connected with the May [Numayri] regime and different armed groups. When the May regime ended, these arms should have been handed over in a disciplined manner to the Armed Forces, who alone are authorized to receive and handle such weapons. But these arms were definitely not handed over as they should have been. So inquiries and investigations were launched.

It is a fact that many popular forces have armed themselves in Sudan. There are two reasons for this. There are those who armed themselves to oppose the May regime and those who armed themselves because of armed attacks which they themselves suffered. Many tribes were attacked. So they armed themselves and made preparations. In general, the authorities are pursuing a clear policy of seizing these arms and prohibiting any unauthorized weapons deals. All of these people, whoever they are, even those who are defending themselves, are subject to the law, because it is the Armed Forces' job to enforce the laws which defend the people.

Some Arab elements have tried to give the impression that certain parties, including the Ummah Party, have militias and are preparing these militias to oppose or resist the country's Armed Forces. Their purpose is to circulate rumors and create dissension in the country. We say that Sudan is a modern state governed by the law and institutions. The Ummah Party—a legal, nationalist and national party—is not preparing for a confrontation with the country's Armed Forces, nor does it accept that it should play such a role.

The fact is that all of us are subject to one constitution and one law. No party whatsoever is entitled to prepare itself for military action or armed action. Indeed, the law is supreme. Anybody found to be in illegal possession of arms or spreading rumors will be firmly dealt with according to the law. Some people are desperate to create dissension in Sudan. Therefore, they have resorted to agitation in the hope of creating alarm among countrymen and creating the impression of enmity between groups of countrymen and Sudan's Armed Forces.

We reject these attempts to create dissension. I request all those who have information about this to contact the relevant authorities instead of hastening to publish it. [Words indistinct] Sudan is an open society. Nothing is hidden [words indistinct]. (?They should not) participate in (?agitation) whose consequences could, through misunderstanding, be harmful to our country. All of us could be affected by this. [passage omitted]

Sudan has now clarified its position on the issue of peace and relief and on the bilateral relationship between it and its neighbor, Ethiopia. A delegation from Ethiopia will visit us this week, bringing a reply to Sudan's initiative on bilateral relations. Sudan's efforts to mediate a peaceful solution to the problems that led to fighting inside Ethiopia will also be discussed.

So, we believe that Sudan's position is now completely clear with regard to peace, relief, and bilateral relations between the two neighbors, Sudan and Ethiopia.

I must here refer to the spirit of cooperation, seriousness, and mutual understanding which dominated all the negotiations that took place between the various parties, the Ummah, the Democratic Unionist Party [DUP], the general unions, the left-wing representation within the Constituent Assembly, the various southern parties, and the Sudanese National Party. This spirit was one of emphasizing the need for national unity in the face of the various challenges. We were determined to overcome all the difficulties and obstacles and arrive at an agreement on the new format. The distribution of the ministerial portfolios will be as follows: eight to the Ummah; six to the DUP; two to the modern forces [trade unions and others]; one to the left-wing representation within the assembly; one to the Sudanese National Party; and four to the southern parties.

As I announced in the Constituent Assembly, the decision arrived at by these forces included agreement that we should discuss the criteria for selecting the person who will head the Defense Ministry, so that he is acceptable to the political leadership and acceptable to [word indistinct] by the military command, without his having any party affiliations. [passage omitted]

This is because we want this portfolio to be free from any party affiliation. This person must be trusted by the political leadership and the military leadership. All sections of the Armed Forces took part in the discussions leading to this understanding. It was recognized that this portfolio should not have a party allegiance. The political and military leaderships have made a pledge of mutual trust and cooperation. They have opened a new page in strengthening the political-military relationship. This strengthening will include the expansion of the Defense Council. The expanded council will provide a forum for discussions about [words indistinct] (?policy)

So eight portfolios are allocated to the Ummah; six to the DUP. An understanding on the defense portfolio has been reached with the Armed Forces leadership: The modern forces will get two portfolios, the left-wing representation inside the assembly will get one, the Sudanese National Party one, and the southern parties will get four.

The reasons for delaying this press conference included the fact that there were some differences between our brothers in the southern parties. As you know, the brothers in the southern parties include some who were originally in the government and some who were originally in opposition. The problem was to reach agreement on the relationship between those who were in government and those who were in opposition. It took some time to reach agreement. But 30 minutes before I arrived here, they reached agreement on a formula for their participation. I believe that the reason for delay disappeared, thanks be to God, in the last few minutes before I arrived here for this press conference.

As usual, I will not announce the program or the names we have agreed on. They will be announced by the State Council, after it has gone through the constitutional formality of approving them, by which we shall abide. God willing, they will [word indistinct] be announced after they have been approved by the State Council. [passage omitted]

Naturally, the Southern Council and the regional governments will be reconstituted. [passage indistinct]

I would like, through you, to appeal to everyone in our country [words indistinct] for cooperation at this critical stage (?so that) our country survives. We must cooperate for defense, peace, security, and our livelihoods. We must cooperate in facing all the matters we have agreed upon.

[Hasan Khalafallah Hasan of AL-AYYAM newspaper] In previous statements, you stated that the government had informed the people's movement, the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM], that (?it) endorsed the peace initiative. Has the government endorsed the peace initiative in full or does it have reservations? Thank you.

[Al-Mahdi] I think Brother Khalafallah's facts are somewhat out of date. A meeting was held at the palace. The results of this meeting were signed by 29 parties and trade unions. This gathering of Sudanese agreed on the peace initiative with certain clarifications. The clarifications were not the Ummah Party's clarifications. Rather, they were ones that were adopted by the parties that signed the phased program. The clarifications concern agreements on national sovereignty, [words indistinct] procedures for a cease-fire, and the lifting of the state of emergency. This will be discussed by a joint technical committee. This is what the political forces agreed upon in their phased program.

We informed the movement of this in writing, after the signing of the phased program. We confirmed our acceptance of the initiative, the peace agreement, with certain clarifications.

[Mustafa Muhammad Mustafa of AL-KHARTOUM newspaper] [Words indistinct] My question is about the peace initiative, the task of the former minister of interior in Addis Ababa and [words indistinct] the program signed by the parties at the Republican Palace with regard to the dissolution of the militias. I link that to the report in AL-KHARTOUM newspaper about the infiltration of quantities of arms. What steps have the Armed Forces taken to dissolve the militias? What are the views of the parties on these militias? What is the attitude of the Ummah Party toward the militias that it controls and those controlled by other parties?

[Al-Mahdi] Why insist that the Ummah Party has militias when I made it clear that it does not? The arms that we mentioned were actually directed against the Ummah Party by a group that is opposed to our party. These arms belonged specifically to a group that was really hostile to the Ummah Party—hostile to Al-Ansar [Mahdist religious fraternity], and to the Ummah Party. It is correct to say that this group resisted the military regime, Numayri's regime. But these arms specifically belonged to the said Popular Front resistance. This resistance front is hostile to the basic leadership of the Ummah Party and to Al-Ansar. We tried to find out where these arms went to because we believe that they were smuggled into (?the country) when the transitional government was in power.

Therefore, the position is that the Ummah Party has no militias. There were indeed camps from which we opposed the May regime. But since the era of national reconciliation began, the people who were based at those camps have returned to Sudan and handed over their weapons to the Armed Forces. The truth of the matter is that during the period of armed opposition to the May regime, there were people who carried arms to use against the regime. These opponents were trained and armed. But after the reconciliation [words indistinct] these forces handed over their arms.

As regards the (?suggestion) that some parties control militias, naturally I [word indistinct] and confirm that the policy and law of the state prohibit the existence of armed entities outside the law, (?outside) the Armed Forces—outside the Police or the regular Armed Forces. Therefore, any breach of this law is regarded as a crime and a violation of the law. It is punishable on this basis. There are forces that armed themselves to defend their tribe from attacks against them. We said that we now want the People's Defense Law to regulate their position and make them subject to the Armed Forces.

I would like this matter to be clear. The party's fighting forces existed during the era of the defunct regime. Our groups returned for the era of national reconciliation. When they returned, they entered civilian life and handed over their weapons to the Armed Forces. [passage omitted]

Premier Dismisses Southern Council Members

EA2203164889 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1415 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Khartoum, 22 Mar (SUNA)—Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, prime minister, today issued a decree dismissing the chairman, Angelo Beda, and the members of the Southern Council. An official source at the general secretariat of the Council of Ministers said in a press statement that a new chairman of the Southern Council would be appointed following his nomination by the southern parliamentary base. Consultations would then be undertaken between the prime minister and the new chairman of the Southern Council on the reformation of the council and the (?formation) of the southern regional governments.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Political Alliance Party, the Federal Peoples Party, and the Progressive Peoples Party have met (?and reviewed) the question of their representation in the government.

Aldo Ajo, chairman of the Democratic Political Alliance has told the press that these parties are of the opinion that the chairman of the Southern Cuncil should be chosen by the Constituent Assembly inasmuch as (?they include) deputies representing the citizens in the southern part of the country. He said 22 deputies supported this proposal, pointing out that they did not agree that the chairman of the council should be chosen by the southern parties.

Announces New Government Formed

NC2203194989 Paris AFP in English 1935 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Khartoum, March 22 (AFP)—Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi of Sudan announced Wednesday that he had formed a new government composed of 23 ministries.

He said ministerial portfolios had been attributed to political parties and trade unions which had signed a broad government programme notably calling for efforts to find a peaceful solution to the war in the south.

Mr. al-Mahdi declined to give the names of the ministers, saying it was up to the Supreme Sovereign Council, or collective presidency, to approve the nominations and publish them.

SPLA 'Non-Committal' on New Government

NC2303105889 Paris AFP in English 1011 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Report by Seyoun Ayele]

[Excerpts] Addis Ababa, March 23 (AFP)—The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was non-committal Thursday in reaction to formation by Prime Minister Al-Sadia al-Hahdi of a new broad-based government in Khartoum excluding the fundamentalist National Islamic Front (NIF).

Mr. al-Mahdi said Wednesday he had set up a 23-member cabinet that included the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which thrashed out a peace formula with the SPLA here last November.

The Sudanese prime minister said he had notified the rebels that his government had now accepted the DUP-/SPLA peace accord, over which he had hesitated and which the NIF had rejected.

However, a rebel spokesman, Captain Nhial Deng Nhial, said the SPLA had nothing as yet to say on the latest developments which, he added, gave the rebels no grounds to shift from previously-stated positions. He would not comment on the exclusion of the NIF from the new coalition in Khartoum. The rebels regard the fundamentalists, who want Sudan to become an Islamic republic, as one of the main obstacles to peace in the country. [passage omitted]

Captain Nhial said that the SPLA wanted the peace accord implemented as a package, not piecemeal. But people in both government and rebel-held areas were suffering food shortages, he said, and the rebels were not opposed to a suggested "peace corridor" to relieve more than two million people threatened with starvation.

Al-Mahdi Urges Meeting With Garang in Mar

EA2303153689 Khartoum SUNA in English 0928 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Khartoum, 23rd March SUNA—Premier Sadiq al-Mahdi called on the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement [SPLM], John Garang, to fix a date for a direct meeting with him in March, the daily AL-AYYAM of today reported. This proposal was delivered to Garang recently in a message from Al-Mahdi along with Al-Mahdi's acceptance of the peace initiative signed between the SPLM and the Democratic Unionist Party in Ethiopia on 16th November with the explanations added to the initiative by the Ummah Party of Premier al-Mahdi, the paper added. The place of the meeting will be negotiated with Garang, the paper said.

Rebels Shoot Down MiG Near Juba 19 Mar

EA2303170689 (Clandestine) Radio of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army in English 1300 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Bright Star Campaign air defense units shot down a MiG-23 jet fighter over Mongalla on 19th March 1989. The jet fighter fell near Juba in its effort to return to Juba.

Tunisia

Ben Ali Appeals for Election Participation

LD2203152489 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 22 Mar 89

["Appeal" by President Ben Ali made on 22 March in Tunis on occasion of upcoming 2 April presidential and legislative elections—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Tunisians: On Sunday, 2 April 1989, we will hold presidential and legislative elections to choose the person who will look after the affairs of the homeland from his position as head of state and the persons who will look after the affairs of the homeland at the chamber of deputies. These elections, which we wanted to hold previously, will be an opportunity to test ourselves and the capability of our people to lay down the foundation of a democratic regime based on a multiparty system. [passage omitted]

We have laid the ground for a strong national concord. We have realized national reconciliation. We gave Islam, our true religion, the attention and care it deserves. We took many measures in the sphere of human rights in Tunisia because there can be no pride, honor, creativeness, or initiative without citizens being assured of their rights and freedoms. We have opened new paths for participation in this development. [passage omitted]

We have looked into the issues facing our country which have accumulated and become more complex in view of the weaknesses and inflexibility which we suffered from. We have paid special attention and care to the poor. We have introduced new dynamism in the administrative system at the national, regional, and local levels. We have given a strong momentum and a new life to the comprehensive development movement at all levels. We have reinstated felicity into our relations with our brethren in the Maghreb and in the East. We have called for an Arab Maghreb that knows no boundaries. We have proposed advanced formulas for Arab Maghreb unity.

Tunisians, Tunisian youths, the presidential elections in which you are called on to participate are an opportunity to hold a popular referendum on the choices and options which we outlined for you on 7 November 1987. It is an opportunity for you to evaluate what we have accomplished, assess the prospects of our work during the next 5 years, and prepare Tunisia to face the challenges of the present and the future. There is no way to meet our people's definite needs for a dignified life and no way to respond to the legitimate aspirations of our youth except by hard work and toil.

Our country is facing major challenges. The generousity of our youth and cadres, the energy of our workers, and the initiatives we take in the economic sphere will successfully overcome these challenges. Some of our people are still deprived of suitable accomodations, drinking water, electricity, drainage networks, and medical care. Some of our youth are still in need of education. Educational conditions and hostel and leisure areas are still in need of improvement in some localities. Some of our people are suffering from unemployment. They are deprived of the honor of contributing to our collective development effort. We pledge, with God's assistance, with all our capabilities, and depending on the country's entire capabilities, to work in order to make all these amenities available. Our preoccupation with our necessary and urgent needs should not divert our attention from our cultural projects, which aim at protecting and preserving our independence by removing the factors of dependency and by preparing our people to effectively and distinctly participate in our world and in the civilization of man. There is no way to realize the aspirations of our people and our country's progress except through attaining the highest levels of economic growth. [passage omitted]

Today you are contributing to making history by your endeavor to make this pioneering democratic experiment successful. You are capable of overcoming all difficulties, no matter how big the latter may be, through work. I call on you all to support the plan of change and reform, and to effectively participate in our development march for the sake of Tunisia. Long live the republic.

Kuwait

Polish Premier Rakowski Pays Official Visit

Joint Statement Issued

LD2203182689 Kuwait KUNA in English 1640 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Kuwait, March 22 (KUNA)—H.H. the Amir, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah and H.H. The Crown Prince and Premier Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah have accepted invitations to visit Poland, a press release at conclusion of Polish Premier Mieczyslaw Rakowski's official visit to Kuwait Wednesday said. The guest, visiting Kuwait March 20-22, conveyed a message from President Jaruzelski [title as received] to H.H. the Amir that included an invitation to visit Warsaw which His Highness accepted.

Rakowski held talks with Shaykh Sa'd and conferred with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, Oil Minister Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah, finance minister and head of the public investment authority, Jasim al-Kharafi, and president of the Kuwaiti Chamber of Commerce and Industry Abd al-'Aziz al-Saqir.

The release underlined that the exchanges between H.H. the Crown Prince and Premier and the Polish prime minister tackled bilateral relations and means of boosting them in addition to a number of regional issues. Identical views were noted toward discussed issues, the release underlined and noted that particular emphasis was laid to promoting bilateral ties in various spheres, especially in the economic sector.

The Kuwaiti-Polish sides exchanged views on a number of economic and social issues, the release said and underscored that the Polish delegation explained new economic reforms and legal measures which would facilitate foreign investment in that country and expressed interest in Kuwaiti investments. The Kuwaiti party clarified goals of its future economic strategy and agreed to study Polish proposals on enhancing bilateral economic cooperation.

Both sides affirmed importance of continuing political dialogue between the two countries, particularly on the leadership level, and following up political consultations at the foreign ministries level, the release noted. It added they also approved cooperating in international platforms and facilitating contacts between both countries' ministries and institutions interested in bilateral cooperation.

They affirmed the need to encourage boosting economic ties through increasing volume of two-way trade, implementing joint projects and exchanging experts as well as bolstering scientific, financial and banking cooperation and technology transfer. Both countries encouraged establishment of joint ventures whether in both states or in other countries including petrochemicals and agreed on holding a meeting for their joint committee this year in accordance with their agreement for technical and economic cooperation.

The two countries support direct cooperation between their respective central planning institutions and health apparatuses the release went on. It said that both parties called for concluding asgreements to encourage and protect investments, avoid double taxation, approve reciprocal recognition of certificates and university degrees and outline cultural and scientific cooperation. They exchanged views on a number of international questions and backed East-West detente and disarmament particularly of nuclear and chemical weapons. They also affirmed conviction that strengthening detente is a vital factor for the interest of nations and facilitates world security.

The Polish team explained the situation in Europe and Warsaw's contribution thorugh its arms reduction plan to boost confidence in Central Europe.

The Kuwaiti team, for its part, presented an evaluation of the Mideast situation and the new positive developments which enhances chances of peaceful settlements to regional disputes and elaborated on Kuwait's contribution in this respect.

The Polish delegation expressed satisfaction over activities of the Arab League's six-member committee on Lebanon that is chaired by Kuwaiti Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad.

The two parties reflected their relief over the halt in the Iraq-iran hostilities and called for implementing the Security Council Resolution 598 as the basis for a just settlement to that conflict and voiced their full support to the U.N. secretary general's efforts in this regard. The Kuwaiti-Polish teams also affirmed their backing to the international Mideast peace conference under U.N. aegis and pointed out that reaching a lasting and just peace in the Middle East should take into consideration the Palestinian people's inalienable, legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Such a settlement should further take into consideration the Palestinian people's right to self-determination that has been manifested in the declaration of the independent Palestinian state by the Palestine National council last November 15 as well as the right of other countries to live within internationally-recognized boundaries. They declared their support to and solidarity with the Palestinian people's uprising in the occupied territories and denounced Israeli practices against the Palestinian people.

Both parties considered the Polish premier's visit to Kuwait an important step for developing bilateral relations, the release pointed out and in conclusion said that Rakowski had invited Shaykh Sa'd to visit Warsaw which the latter accepted.

Talks Described as 'Frank'

LD2203182489 Kuwait KUNA in English 1250 GMT 22 Mar 89

[By Saleh Nazzal and Yhya Mattar]

[Text] Kuwait, March 22 (KUNA)—Polish Premier Mieczyslaw Rakowski Wednesday described his talks with H.H. the Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad and H.H. Crown Prince and Premier Shaykh Sa'd al-'Aballah as "fruitful, constructive and frank." Rakowski, in a press conference held at conclusion of his three-day visit, praised Kuwait which he visits for the first time and said that it plays a prominent role in international politics and trade. He underlined that Shaykh Sa'd had affirmed to him Kuwait's concern with promoting relations with Warsaw and preparedness to forge cooperation in all spheres. The premier noted in particular that the crown prince had pointed to Kuwait's need of doctors in various branches of medicine and treating Kuwaiti patients in Poland.

Rakowski said that for his part he could not find any barriers hindering promotion of bilateral relations. Pointing out that he read a lot on Kuwait before his trip, the premier said that reading is one thing but visiting is another and said that Kuwait is enjoying an admirable renaissance. The Polish prime minister said that discussions tackled a number of political questions including Mideast situation, and developments in Lebanon and in East and central Europe. The talks also touched on the Palestine cause, Rakowski said and renewed his country's support to the Palestinian people's cause and to the international Mideast peace conference under U.N. patronage to end the prolonged tragedy and sufferings of that people.

He explained that the two parties' views did not differ on means of settling major disputes in the region and "we did not differ over evaluation or analysis of the main question of mutual concern." Rakowski expressed deep satisfaction toward the Kuwaiti officials' understanding of the situation in Poland, pointing out that they hoped [as received] Poland all success in face of the intricate situation there. He underlined that the visit primarily aimed at fostering cooperation and trade exchange between Kuwait and Poland and added that he reflected his government's wish to boost commercial dealings with Kuwait and Polish experts and companies readiness to contribute in executing government projects including the proposed water pipeline between Iraq and Kuwait.

The prime minister said that his accompanying delegates explained to Kuwaiti ministers the importance of current political and economic changes in Poland, noting that the Kuwaiti side understood the changes and the Polish Parliament laws in this regard. He affirmed that Poland provides suitable circumstances for foreign investment there and added that he leaves Kuwait with the absolute conviction in the presence of real potentials for expanding Polish exports to Kuwait.

The Polish guest said that exchanges also dealt with Kuwait's contribution in building the Gdansk refinery, noting that the Kuwaiti party did not only listen but also asked for more details and for Poland's speculation of volume of the Kuwaiti capital's share in the project. The concerned Polish authorities will collect the necessary documents and supply the Kuwaiti side with them, Rakowski said and stressed that his country was pursuing a clearcut policy in cancelling the state's role in national economy, limiting it instead to general strategy and society's interests.

Warsaw is giving institutions more freedom to assume their role and is boosting policy of economic openness, effecting deep-rooted changes in the economic infrastructure and providing the necessary atmosphere for foreign investments, he elaborated. The prime minister, meanwhile, denied that reopening the Israeli Embassy and allowing a mission catering for Israeli interests to operate in Warsaw followed Zionist pressures. He said that many considerations were behind that step including the big numbers of Jews in Poland and asserted that resumption of Israeli-Polish relations was conditioned to settling the Palestine question.

Poland had followed the suit of the Soviet Union and other East European countries which severed relations with the Zionist entity after the June war of 1967 with the exception of Romania. However, Poland reopened the Israeli Embassy in Warsaw in 1987 and Israel reciprocated. Poland also received a number of Israeli delegations the highest one being led by Deputy Premier Yitzhaq Navon last April.

Rakowski hailed Poland's cultural relations with the Arab world specially Iraq and Kuwait, pointing out that cultural exchanges between them are not obstructed by any hurdles. He predicted that elections in his country would take place by June and denied that the Polish trade union, Solidarity, will have any role whether in fixing a date for the elections or in deciding on the issue. He asserted that his party was the one that launched that initiative which is still being debated at a round table conference participated by all Polish concerned parties and expected the discussion to end by early April.

Rakowski underlined that current changes in Poland, political, social or economic, are independent from the Soviet policy of perestroyka. He said that Poland started the reforms early this decade and noted that perestroyka coincided and conformed with Polish ideas for initiating reforms in socialism. He said success of the perestroyka would boost status of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and other supportive forces in the Soviet Union.

The premier earlier today toured the Kuwait national museum and then visited Al-Ahmadi Governorate where he was received by Governor Shaykh 'Ali Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah. The guest then toured the Kuwait Oil Company exhibition after which he was escorted to the Mina 'Abdallah port where he visited its refinery's various sections.

Rakowski Departs 22 Mar

LD2203185889 Warsaw PAP in English 1724 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Kuwait City, March 22—Polish Prime Minister Mieczyslaw F. Rakowski today ended his official visit to Kuwait that he paid at the invitation from Crown Prince and Premier of Kuwait Shaykh Sa'd al-Sabah. On the last day, Premier Rakowski visited the national museum and next went to the province of Al-Ahmadi where he saw an oil refinery. The Polish premier met also journalists.

A joint communique was adopted at the end of the visit, stressing that the talks conducted by Mieczyslaw F. Rakowski were held in an atmosphere of cordiality, friendship and mutual understanding. The Polish premier was received by Amir of Kuwait Shaykh Jabir al-Sabah. During the friendly talks, the head of the Polish Government conveyed a message from President [as received] of the Council of State Wojciech Jaruzelski to the amir together with an invitation to pay a visit to Poland. The amir received the invitation with pleasure.

During the talks conducted by the Polish premier, both sides discussed the current state of bilateral relations and set directions of their further development. They also exchanged views on the main international and regional problems, stating convergence or identity of stands on questions under discussion.

Both sides told each other about the main directions of socio-economic development and foreign activity. Both sides pointed to the necessity to develop political dialogue between both states, to conduct periodic political consultations between the foreign ministries, to cooperate in the international arena, including in the U.N. forum and to foster contacts between other ministries and institutions and organizations interested in direct cooperation. Both sides emphasized the need to further develop economic relations between the two countries by increasing trade, implementing joint projects, employing highly skilled experts, greater cooperation in science and technological processes, the transfer of know-how and financial and banking cooperation. Both sides will support the starting of joint ventures both in the two countries and in third markets, including in the chemical and petro-chemical industries. The two sides agreed that a meeting of a joint committee envisaged by the Polish-Kuwaiti agreement on cooperation in economy and technology would be held this year.

Prime Minister Mieczyslaw F. Rakowski expressed thanks for hospitality and invited Shaykh Sa'd al-Sabah to pay an official visit to Poland. The Sheikh accepted the invitation with pleasure.

Envoy Invites Lebanese Officials to Meeting

LD2203140189 Kuwait KUNA in English 1158 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Damascus, March 22 (KUNA)—Kuwaiti Ambassador to Syria Ahmad al-Jasim returned here late last night following a two-day visit to Lebanon. The Kuwaiti envoy delivered invitations to former Lebanese presidents, premiers and speakers from Kuwait's deputy premier and foreign minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah in his capacity as head of the Arab League six-man Good Offices Committee on Lebanon.

Shaykh Sabah asked the concerned Lebanese figures to meet with the committee in Tunisia on March 27-28 on sidelines of the Arab foreign ministers meeting.

Al-Jasim, who said that all invitees will attend the meeting, had met also with Acting Premier Dr. Salim al-Huss, head of the military government Gen. Michel 'Awn, Parliament Speaker Husayn al-Husayni and Christian and Muslim spiritual leaders for discussions on developments in the Lebanese arena.

Oman

Sultan Qabus Receives Saudi Foreign Minister

JN2203134289 Muscat Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] His Majesty Sultan Qabus ibn Sa'id received His Royal Highness Sa'ud al-Faysal, foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, at his majesty's office in the Al-Hisn Palace in Salalah today. He delivered a message to his majesty from his brother Saudi King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques. The meeting was attended by Yusuf ibn 'Alawi ibn 'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs; and 'Abd al-Muhsin Salih al-Balla', Saudi ambassdor to the Sultanate.

Kuwaiti Interior Minister Meets Deputy Premier

LD2203142389 Kuwait KUNA in English 1204 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Muscat, March 22 (KUNA)—Kuwaiti Interior Minister Shaykh Salim al-Sabah conferred here Wednesday with Deputy Omani Premier for Security and Defense Affairs Fahar ibn Taymur. The meeting was attended by Omani Interior Minister Badr ibn Harib, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Muscat 'Abd al-Wahab al-Adsani and other officials accompanying Shaykh Salim on his urgent visit to the Sultanate. Shaykh Salim and his team, who are scheduled to head for home later this afternoon, then had a cruise off the Qabus port.

Concludes Visit, Departs

JN2203145689 Muscat Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Excerpts] His Highness Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, Kuwaiti interior minister, praised the wise policy pursued by His Majesty Sultan Qabus ibn Sa'id in shaping the Oman of tomorrow. In a statement before leaving the country this afternoon, his highness said: Anyone who sees the Military Museum will see Omani history, which tells of the struggle by a people throughout ages. He who sees the present will admire the Omani people and their wise leadership even more. [passage omitted]

During his 4-day visit to the Sultanate, His Highness Shaykh Salim al-Sabah was honored to meet His Majesty Sultan Qabus ibn Sa'id. He also held official talks with Interior Minister Badr ibn Sa'ud ibn Harib. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Official Rebuts French Article on YAR Relations

LD2203152789 Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 1430 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Commenting on an item published by the French weekly magazine LE POINT in its issue No 861 of 22 March 1989, which said that the YAR's participation in the economic community is opposed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and which resulted in the outbreak of disturbances in the YAR, an authoritative source told SPA:

It is highly regrettable that the French magazine LE POINT should publish these lies, which are fabricated by the enemies of the Arab nation to spread doubt and create disunity among Arab brothers.

The source went on to say that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has already stated through its leaders its support and blessing for any sort of Arab cooperation in various fields. The Kingdom's firm stance has been demonstrated by the immediate telephone contact that the custodian of the two holy mosques had with his brother, His Excellency President Saddam Husayn during the meeting of the Arab Cooperation Council in Baghdad, in which the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz expressed to his excellency the Iraqi president—and through him to his brothers meeting in Baghdad,—his sincere congratulations for this Arab achievement, while wishing them continued success in their efforts to unite their actions and and plans.

The source added that the Government of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the custodian of the two holy mosques, is fully confident that the fraternal Yemeni people will rally with all sincerity and loyalty around their leader and pioneer of their renaissance, His Excellency President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, who guides the Yemeni people toward the desired progress, prosperity, and success.

The source concluded the statement by saying that this clarification undoubtedly refutes in full and in part the allegations published by the Frech magazine LE POINT and that fabrications backfire on their source and publisher.

United Arab Emirates

Shaykh Zayid Congratulates Mubarak on Tabah

JN2203162989 Manama WAKH in English 1510 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Abu Dhabi, March 22 (GNA)—UAE [United Arab Emirates] president Shaykh Zayid ibn Sultan Al-Nuhayyan last night sent a cable of greetings to Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on the return of Tabah to Egypt's sovereignty.

In his cable, Shaykh Zayid expressed delight on the occasion and said the event was a triumph for all Arab states.

Reportage on Visit by Austria's Kurt Waldheim

JN1903185889 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1815 GMT 19 Mar 89

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 19 Mar (WAKH)—Shaykh Zayid ibn Sultan al-Nuhayyan, head of of state of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], has welcomed Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, currently visiting the UAE. His highness applauded the Austrian president's honorable position on international issues and support for justice. This came during friendly talks between the two presidents at the guest house soon after Waldheim's arrival.

His highness stressed that Waldheim's visit should reinforce friendship and cooperation between the UAE and Austria. World leaders are dutybound to exert themselves on behalf of security and stability in their respective countries, since peoples always aspire to affluence under stable conditions, and differences should be resolved through dialogue and understanding, said his highness.

Dr Waldheim expressed the hope that the prevailing detente in international relations would help resolve regional conflicts including the Middle East conflict. He applauded Shaykh Zayid's great efforts to achieve further development in agriculture, construction, and culture in the UAE.

Delegations Hold Talks

JN2003151889 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1315 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 20 Mar (WAKH)—An expanded session of talks on the ministerial level between the United Arab Emirates [UAE] and Austria was held here at noon today. It was attended on the UAE side by Economy and Trade Minister Sayf ibn 'Ali al-Jarwan; Health Minister Hamad 'abd al-Rahman al-Midfa'; Nasir al-Nuways, under secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Industry and director general of the Abu

Dhabi Economic Development Fund; and UAE Ambassador to Austria 'Abd al-'Aziz Nasir al-Nuways. Austria was represented at the meeting by Transport and Nationalized Industries Minister Rudolf Streicher, State Secretary for Finance Gunther Stummvoll, and nonresident Austrian Ambassador to the UAE Gerfried Buchauer.

Sayf al-Jarwan stated that they discussed issues concerned with economic relations, trade exchange, and the promotion and development of joint cooperation, especially in the fields of tourism and trade between the two countries.

He added that they agreed to hold a meeting of the joint cooperation committee during the second half of this year in Vienna. Key economic figures will exchange visits and set up exhibitions to promote goods in both countries. They also reviewed the role of the Arab-Austrian Chamber of Commerce in promoting trade cooperation between the UAE and the Austrian Republic, especially between Austria and the Arab countries in general.

On the other hand, Nasir al-Nuways stated that they reviewed the appropriate means to encourage tourism between the UAE and Austria and to bring tourist groups from Austria to the UAE in winter. They will also organize tours from the UAE to Austria through the Austrian tourist offices in the UAE. He added that they reviewed the Abu Dhabi Economic Development Fund's contribution in the project of the recently opened International Conference Center in the Austrian capital.

The contribution of the fund along with the Arab side is estimated at about $12 million. Its aim is to transform Vienna into an international center for conferences and increase economic and tourist activity.

Leaders Hold 'Closed Meeting'

JN2003153789 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1435 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 20 Mar (WAKH)—United Arab Emirates [UAE] President Shaykh Zayid ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan held a closed meeting in Abu Dhabi today with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim.

A responsible source said in a statement to WAM that President Waldheim congratulated His Highness Shaykh Zayid on being elected man of the year for 1988. He indicated that this award demonstrates the international position occupied by his highness, his great contribution to regional and international issues, and his work on behalf of world peace and stability.

The source added that the UAE president reaffirmed his country's interest in developing cooperation with Austria in appreciation of President Waldheim's positions on international events and peace issues.

He indicated that the two presidents reviewed all current international developments and weighed them carefully in light of the current detente in international relations and its potential for solving regional problems.

The source said that the meeting included discussions of the situation in the Gulf region after the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran. The two presidents agreed on the need to pool international efforts to push the negotiations between the two countries toward a permanent peace in the region. In addition, they reviewed the situation in the Middle East and current peace moves in the region.

The two presidents agreed on the need to hold an international peace conference as soon as possible with the participation of all concerned parties because it is the only way to bring about a permanent and just peace.

The two presidents called on the new U.S. Administration to move seriously and honestly and shoulder its responsibilities on behalf of peace in the region.

The source indicated that the meeting of the two presidents dealt with bilateral relations and the appropriate means to develop friendship and mutual cooperation between the two countries. The prevailing atmosphere at the meeting was one of friendship and understanding, and points of view were identical on the issues discussed.

Waldheim on Ties With Gulf

JN2103063589 Manama WAKH in Arabic 2050 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 20 Mar (WAKH)—Austrian President Dr Kurt Waldheim has asserted that relations between his country and the United Arab Emirates [UAE] are taking major steps for the benefit of the two friendly peoples.

In a news conference he and his delegation held, Waldheim talked about the importance of cooperation between his country and the states in the region in general, and the need to employ all available resources to develop economic and trade relations to achieve the common goals of their peoples. He pointed out that he found deep understanding on this point from the officials during his visit.

Waldheim expressed his hope that the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran would hold and that UN Security Council Resolution 598 would be implemented in full so that peace could return to this sensitive and strategically important region. He asserted that with peace, the process of comprehensive development can begin to compensate for the damage caused in both countries by the 8-year war.

The Austrian president said that his country believes that the solution to the Middle East problem can be achieved through an international conference, which must include all the parties concerned, including the PLO. He added that through negotiations and constructive dialogue, the desired settlement of this issue, which has held the interest of the whole world for many years, can be achieved.

Waldheim also touched on a number of other issues, including the Afghan people's cause and the Cyprus issue. He denounced the book of the renegade, Salman Rushdie, pointing out that it is a "disgraceful" book that encroaches on a heavenly sacred religion.

Meets Defense Minister

JN2103204789 Manama WAKH in Arabic 2015 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] Dubayy, 21 Mar (WAKH)—UAE Defense Minister Shaykh Muhammad ibn Rashid al-Maktum has met with Austrian President Dr Kurt Waldheim.

During the meeting, they reviewed a number of issues pertaining to bilateral cooperation, especially in the economic field and in enhancing bilateral trade.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Rashid al-Maktum also reviewed with Dr Waldheim a number of international issues and the efforts being currently exerted to resolve regional conflicts in the world, especially the efforts being made to find a just, peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict.

Holds News Conference, Departs

JN2203123289 Abu Dhabi Domestic Service in Arabic 0930 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Excerpts] Austrian President Dr Kurt Waldheim and his wife left the country at 1145 today following a state visit to the United Arab Emirates [UAE]. The president, His Highness Shaykh Zayid ibn Sultan al-Nuhayyan, led those who saw the Austrian president off. [passage omitted]

In a news conference before his departure this morning, President Waldheim spoke about the intensive talks he held with his highness the president and other senior UAE officials, saying these talks dealt with the situation in the region in light of the cease-fire agreement between Iraq and Iran, the efforts which are being exerted to hold the international conference to solve the Middle East crisis, the situation in Afghanistan, and other international problems, in addition to ways of promoting bilateral cooperation in all political and economic fields.

President Waldheim appealed to all parties, particularly the superpowers, to intensify their efforts to convene an international conference to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. He described the Middle East region as the most volatile part of the world. He affirmed that a resolution of this conflict, which has continued for more than 40 years, will be in the interest of international peace and security, particularly in view of the recent detente between the United States and the USSR, which has led so far to the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran and Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Dr Waldheim strongly criticized Israel's policy of brutal repression of the Palestinain popular intifadah [uprising] in the occupied territories. He said: We reject and denounce these practices. This repression must stop.

He added that the policy of the Israeli occupation authorities is very harmful to the prospects of achieving a durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. He stressed that the best means to reach a real settlement is through an international conference attended by all parties concerned, including the PLO.

Dr Waldheim also criticized the Israeli Government's stand under Yitzhaq Shamir, which rejects the idea of an international conference and holding negotiations with the PLO. However, he asserted the importance of the role that can be played by the United States in its capacity as the closest ally to Israel. He described Washington's decision to resume its dialogue with the PLO as an important and positive development. He expressed the hope that this would result in international recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

The Austrian president disclosed that in addition to its declared positions in support of Palestinian people's rights, including the resolutions of the Palestine National Council in Algiers last November, his country is playing its role within the context of quiet diplomacy to narrow viewpoints between the two parties. He said that sometimes such diplomacy achieves better results than statements and declared resolutions. He emphasized the importance of overcoming the stalemate in the Middle East crisis.

Rashid 'Abdallah Meets FRG Education Minister

JN2103170289 Manama WAKH in English 1620 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] Abu Dhabi, March 21 (GNA)—UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Rashid 'Abdallah today discussed the Middle East and the Gulf war with West German education and culture minister Jurgen Molleman. Molleman said after the meeting they discussed current efforts to hold an international Middle East peace conference. He referred to the efforts by the two superpowers and the European Community (EC). He said West Germany welcomes the U.S.-PLO dialogue, started in December after a 13-year-old American ban on the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

"Such a dialogue could create proper conditions to start a direct dialogue between the PLO and Israel," he said. "Without the dialogue, an international conference would not be held," he added. He said the EC was encouraging Israel to start talks with the PLO and pressing it to end its practices against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Their talks also covered the Gulf ceasefire between Iraq and Iran and Molleman said the truce would help achieve progress in a peace settlement through implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 598. "We hope the talks will help bring security and stability to the Gulf," he said. He said they also discussed last week's decisions of the Islamic foreign ministers in Riyadh.

Molleman, a former minister of state for foreign affairs, invited 'Abdallah to visit West Germany.

Yemen Arab Republic

Salih Receives Message From Al-Bid, Al-'Attas

JN2303091289 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 0430 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Brother Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, and secretary general of the General People's Congress, received in his office yesterday evening brother Yasin Sa'id Nu'man, member of the [Yemeni Socialist Party] Political Bureau and prime minister of the southern part of the homeland, who conveyed to the brother president leader and secretary general a message from brothers 'Ali Salim al-Bid, secretary general of the Central Committee, and Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Attas, member of the Political Bureau and chairman of the Supreme People's Council Presidium in the southern part of the homeland.

The message deals with issues of unionist action between the two parts of the homeland. During the meeting, brothers 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Ghani [Yemen Arab Republic prime minister] and Yasin Sa'id Nu'man submitted to the brother president leader and secretary general a report on the progress of work of the current session of the joint Yemeni ministerial committee. The meeting was attended by brother 'Abd al-Karim 'Abdallah al-'Arashi, Consultative Council chairman and Standing Committee member, as well as members of the two sides in the ministerial committee and the secretariat of unity affairs.

UN Observers' Commander Departs for Tehran

JN2303105589 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0917 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Mar (INA)—SFRY General Slavko Jovic, commander of the UN observer team supervising the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran, left Baghdad for Tehran this morning. Gen Jovic's visit to Tehran is part of his shuttle between the two countries' capitals. He was seen off by the representative of the commission for coordination with the UN observers, the Iraqi assistant, and the resident UN representative in Baghdad.

U.S. State Department Delegation Arrives

JN2203191489 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1840 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Mar (INA)—Abraham Sofaer, legal adviser at the U.S. State Department, arrived in Baghdad this with his delegation on a visit of several days to Iraq.

During the visit, the delegation will hold talks with Iraqi officials on enhancing bilateral cooperation.

Sofaer was received upon arrival by the head of the Legal Department at the Foreign Ministry and a number of the U.S. Embassy staff in Baghdad.

Lebanon's Economy Minister Continues Visit

Meets With Saddam Husayn

JN2203185489 Baghdad INA in English 1800 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 22, INA—President Saddam Husayn received in audience here today Staff Brigadier General 'Isam Abu Jamrah, Lebanese deputy premier and minister of oil, industry, trade and economy, now on a visit to Iraq.

During the audience, Mr. Abu Jamrah extended to President Husayn congratulations on the great victory achieved for Iraq and the Arab nation under his excellency's historic leadership and expressed gratitude of the Lebanese people for Iraq's national and principled stances toward preserving Arabism of Lebanon and integrity of its land. Brotherly relations and means of enhancing them between the two sisterly countries and the current situation in Lebanon came up for discussion during the audience which was attended by Mr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih, trade minister, and the Lebanese ambassador to Iraq.

Talks With Trade Minister

JN2203180589 Baghdad INA in English 1700 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 22, INA—Mr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih, minister of trade today conferred here with Staff Brigadier General 'Isam Abu Jamrah, Lebanese deputy premier and minister of oil, industry, trade and economy, now on a visit to Iraq. During the meeting, the two sides were reported to have discussed and evaluated the process of trade and economic cooperation between Iraq and Lebanon and means for enhancing it.

Joint Committee Minutes Signed

JN2203201089 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1900 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Mar (INA)—Today, Lebanon and Iraq signed the minutes of the first session of the Joint Iraqi-Lebanese Committee.

Hikmat 'Umar Mukhaylif, finance minister, signed the minutes for Iraq while Staff Brigadier General 'Isam Abu Jamrah, Lebanese deputy prime minister and minister of economy, trade, oil, and industry, signed for Lebanon.

The minutes, which seek to achieve the best possible level of economic and trade cooperation between the two fraternal states, provide for an equitable agreement on the exchange of commodities and for commercial exhibitions in the two countries.

The minutes provide for a Lebanese trade week in Baghdad, the reopening of the Lebanese Commercial Center, and a program for enhancing cooperation between the General Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce and Industry on the one hand and Lebanese chambers of commerce and industry as well as the Lebanese Industrial and Commercial Society on the other. Moreover, the minutes also provide for the exchange of technical expertise between the two fraternal countries in industry, agriculture, and tourism.

The meetings of the first session of the Joint Iraqi-Lebanese Committee began here yesterday. The Iraqi representatives to the meetings included officials of the Health, Trade, Finance, Transport and Communications, and Industry and Military Industrialization ministries and representatives of the Central Bank of Iraq and the Al-Rafidayn Bank. The Lebanese delegation was composed of officials of the Union of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and representatives of the industrial and commercial sectors.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Arrives 21 Mar

JN2103195589 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1835 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Mar (INA)—Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Omar Abu Hassan has arrived in Baghdad with a delegation on an official visit to Iraq lasting several days.

He will hold talks with Iraqi officials on ways to strengthen relations between the two countries. Views on international issues of common concern will also be exchanged.

He was received at the airport by Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; the Foreign Ministry under secretary; and the Malaysian ambassador in Baghdad.

Received by Tariq 'Aziz

JN2203144889 Baghdad INA in English 1400 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 22, INA— Iraqi Foreign Minister Mr. Tariq 'Aziz and Malaysia's Foreign Minister, Mr. Datuk Omar Abu Hassan held here today talks to promote bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The talks, which were attended by the delegation accompanying the Malaysian minister, covered reviewing bilateral relations between Iraq and Malaysia and discussing means of developing them in various fields to serve their interests and objectives to reach the best formulas of fruitful cooperation.

The talks also covered the latest developments in the Iraq-Iran negotiations to implement the U.N. Security Council Resolution No. 598 under the auspices of the U.N. secretary general.

Mr. 'Aziz explained the difficulties placed by Iran before reaching comprehensive and lasting peace between the two countries and in the entire region.

The meeting was attended by Iraqi foreign undersecretary and head of the Second International Office in the Foreign Ministry. On the Malaysian side they were attended by foreign undersecretaries for west Asia affairs and for economic affairs and the Malaysian ambassador in Baghdad.

Cooperation Talks Begin

JN2203152789 Baghdad INA in English 1430 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 22, INA—The Iraqi-Malaysian Joint Committee for Technical, Trade and Economic Cooperation started meetings here today.

High on the committee agenda are topics related to enhancing trade and economic relations and hammering out a memorandum of understanding to this effect.

The Iraqi side was headed by director general of external economic relations of the Trade Ministry while the Malaysian side was led by deputy secretary general at the Foreign Ministry.

President Chairs Meeting, Recalls Victories

JN2203183889 Baghdad INA in English 1755 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 22, INA—The day of liberating Al-Faw and the 8th of August were declared national days and considered official holidays, it was announced here today.

The decision came during a joint meeting of the Revolution Command Council, the regional leadership of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and the Council of Ministers chaired by President Saddam Husayn.

The decision came to mark the first anniversary of liberating Al-Faw and the day of victory on 8th August 1988.

President Husayn stressed that triumph of Iraqis and their superiority in the battles of liberation Al-Faw and consequent battles in Al-Shalamjah [Shalamcheh], Majnun islands and Al-Zubaydat were in reality a human superiority and not a technical one as described by some people.

During the more than four-hour joint meeting, President Husayn added that the course resorted to by Iraq, based on the party course depended on awareness and wise outlook while the Iranian regime depended on blindfolded course which ultimately led to sowing defeat in the selves of the Iranian troops.

The joint meeting discussed and endorsed three projected agreements between the Arab Cooperation Council to be submitted to the forthcoming session of the Council's ministerial body.

The first agreement deals with transfer and work of the four countries' citizens, the second on judicial and legal cooperation and the third concerns regulating cooperation in air transport and civil aviation.

Public Holiday Declared for 1 Apr Elections

JN2003200889 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Statement issued by the Presidential Office—date not given]

[Text] Based on the provisions of paragraph 1 of Revolution Command Council Decree No 56 dated 31 January 1989, it has been decided to consider Saturday, 25 Sha'ban 1409 Hegira, corresponding to 1 April 1989, the day of the National Assembly elections, an official holiday to allow all citizens to exercise to cast their vote and elect their representatives. This is in accordance with President leader Saddam Husayn's instructions to consolidate the democracy and expand popular participation in it.

[Signed] Ahmad Husayn, head of the Presidential Office

Peres Plan on Demilitarized Palestinian State

TA2303072589 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Mar 89 p 1

[Report by political correspondent 'Aqiva Eldar]

[Text] An unofficial 1-year cease-fire between Israel and the Palestinians on all fronts, including the intifadah [uprising], and the opening of negotiations in Geneva similar to those conducted in 1973—these are the main clauses in a phased peace plan formulated by Shim'on Peres with the help of a team headed by Efrayim Sne, a brigadier general in the reserves and former head of the Civil Administration in Judaea and Samaria.

The plan, whose main points have been learned by HA'ARETZ, was to have been first publicized only after the prime minister's return from the United States. In an interview with Peres that will appear tomorrow, he refused to divulge the contents of his plan "so as not to impair the success of the plan Shamir will present in Washington."

Peres' plan includes preparing a meeting between Israel and Palestinians, who will include representatives of the Palestinians in exile, with informal Soviet-U.S. encouragement. The delegation from the territories would be elected in free elections overseen by international observers (based on the precedent set in the Philippines where U.S. senators served as observers) and parliament members from Europe.

Direct negotiations would be held between Israel and either a Palestinian delegation or a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation under the aegis of the international conference. If Jordan refused to take part in representing the Palestinians, it along with Egypt would be invited to the talks as observers.

The solution proposed by Peres, which he hinted at in his address this week to the Conference on Jewish Solidarity, consists of an alliance between three countries with two armies. Peres described it as the "Benelux model." The plan sets a precedent as far as Israel's security is concerned: The Israeli army would withdraw to specific areas, including the region along the Jordan River, while the remaining parts of the West Bank would be demilitarized. Security would be safeguarded by the Israeli and Jordanian armies. The plan, in fact, refers to an independent Palestinian state with its own governing institutions, including a police and a parliament.

According to Peres, Israel at one time agreed that the United States present conditions to the PLO. Therefore, the argument with the Americans should not be on the conditions posed to the PLO, but on the extent to which the PLO fulfills these conditions. If the PLO meets these conditions, particularly with regard to terror, Israel would have no case against the United States.

Peres supports the U.S. notion whereby in the first stage there would be talks with representatives from the territories who would later be joined by representatives of the Palestinians in exile. He does not rule out the possibility that he may one day confer with 'Arafat, but he says: "I would not like to give priority to the cause of a person or an organization over that of a people."

It has been learned from the finance minister's office that Peres is updating his political plan in conjunction with members of his party. Nevertheless, the minister does not plan to detail the content of his plan before it has been formulated in full, or before the prime minister's return from the United States. The ideas being reported, taken out of context, are more speculation than a plan.

Peres 'Vehemently' Denies Plan

TA2303061089 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0500 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Vice Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has vehemently denied an article published this morning in HA'ARETZ reporting that he has formulated a plan for setting up a demilitarized Palestinian state. Peres asserted that he has never called for the creation of a Palestinian state. He pointed out, however, that he would indeed welcome a federative solution along the lines of the Benelux model. This is a position he has voiced many times in the past.

The HA'ARETZ article reports that Peres suggested a political process that would begin with an unofficial year-long cease-fire between Israel and the Palestinians that will also include the uprising. Negotiations based on the model of the talks held in Geneva after the 1973 Yom Kippur War will be held in that city concurrently with the cease-fire negotiations.

The newspaper reports that Peres' phased plan was prepared by a team headed by Efrayim Sne, the former head of the Judaea and Samaria Civil Administration. The plan was scheduled to be exposed to the media only after the return of Prime Minister Shamir from Washington.

Mr Sne, who is currently in Switzerland, told the Voice of Israel over the phone that he will not comment on the matter.

Sne Denies Authorship of Plan

TA2303074489 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Excerpt] In a telephone conversation from Switzerland this morning, Efrayim Sne, the former head of the Judaea and Samaria Civil Administration and currently a member of the Labor Party, denied reports that he authored the Peres plan.

[Begin Sne recording] This plan was not initiated by me, nor was I its author. Thus, this must have been some sort of mistake. As a member of the Labor Party, however, I also think about all sorts of ways to accelerate the political process. Still, I never authored this plan. [end recording]

Meanwhile, at yesterday's weekly Alignment ministers' meeting, Minister Peres clarified that his party will not initiate an argument with the Likud on the political issue until after the prime minister returns from the United States. At the same time, said Peres, Shamir must realize that views other than his also exist.

Ministers Peres and Rabin asserted during the session that the Americans would be prepared to discuss the Rabin plan [as heard] as the basis for negotiations in the region. Minister Rabin yesterday rejected any possibility of negotiations with the PLO or the establishment of a Palestinian state. [passage omitted]

Rabin on Party Members Supporting PLO Talks

TA2203201689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1730 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has leveled criticism at his party members who support a dialogue with the PLO. According to Rabin, such a move will only harm the Labor Party. Yitzhaq Rabin appeared before the Labor Party's young guard; our party affairs correspondent Shlomo Raz reports:

[Begin recording] [Raz] Yitzhaq Rabin is confident that a plan that follows the government's basic guidelines and that is agreeable to both the Likud and the Alignment can be presented. As Rabin put it, this will be a proposal that the Likud will not be able to refuse and that will be acceptable to the United States, too. In his remarks to the party's young guard, he criticized Alignment members also. Rabin did not name names, but it was clear that he was referring to Deputy Finance Minister Yosi Beilin.

[Rabin] I am sorry for colleagues who are preoccupied only with raising the proposal of a dialogue with the PLO. This runs counter to the party's platform and to the government's basic guidelines; it is a proposal that will not result in anything except damage for the Labor Party. Such a proposal will certainly not promote a political process.

[Raz] Talks with the PLO mean a Palestinian state, a withdrawal to the 1967 borders, and the partition of Jerusalem. Rabin's plan consists of four [as heard] stages: a reasonable Israeli proposal, calm so that elections can be held, and elections for a political representation that can include Palestinians who are not residents of the territories as well.

Is there an assessment by the Intelligence Branch on the need to speak with the PLO? Rabin was asked. His response: There is such an assessment, but it does not deal with recommendations for political action by the Israeli Government.

As for U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's comment on the need for a dialogue with the PLO, the defense minister said this indicates that the United States prefers talks between Israel and the residents of the territories, which, if it fails, will lead to talks with the PLO. [end recording]

Rabin 'Leaning Toward' Run for Party Leader

TA2303104689 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 23 Mar 89 p 1

[Report by Menahem Shezaf]

[Text] Yitzhaq Rabin hinted in a recent series of consultations with various Labor Party figures that he is leaning toward running for leader of the party.

Rabin does not plan to formally announce his candidacy, but he will advocate a political line opposed to that of party leader Shim'on Peres, and will submit a political plan that opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state to the Labor Party Central Committee for its approval. Party figures say that Rabin will try to rally support for his plan among the party's ministers and institutions and turn it into a lever in anticipation of his challenge of the leadership.

Towards this end, Rabin has launched a series of meetings with party members. He met members of the party's younger generation yesterday and presented his political plan to them. Next week he will confer with members of the hawkish group, the party's mainstream. A few days ago, Peres and Rabin met for a tete-a-tete session. In the course of it, Rabin announced his opposition to the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity which, in his opinion, Peres has been furthering through Knesset Member Yosi Beilin.

In recent meetings with close associates, Peres has said that he expects Rabin to contest his leadership of the party, and noted that he is troubled by a possible alliance between him and Minister Moshe Shahal. According to Peres he is not worried about the statements of Mordekhay Gur and Gad Ya'aqobi that they intend to run against him. Rabin's close associates have confirmed that Rabin and Shahal have been holding contacts with regard to a possible alliance, in the framework of which Shahal would support Rabin for the job of party chairman.

Shahal yesterday denied a report that he too intends to run for the party leadership. His confidants said that "the issue is irrelevant" and that "all that Shahal said is that when there is a contest for the leadership the candidates will not fall from heaven, but will come from our own ranks."

Rabin: Media 'Leaks' Do Not Represent Report

TA2303081689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0505 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Telephone interview with Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin by military affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe on 23 March—recorded]

[Text] [Rabin] The intelligence evaluation presents positions and assessments to permit the necessary preparatory measures for possible developments on the Arab side. The Intelligence Branch analysis does not deal, even in the slightest, with recommendations as to the steps the State of Israel must take. That is why the intelligence report presents what the other side says and how it says it. Thus, all the excitement in the media, which is probably based on distorted leaks from the meeting, has no connection with the Intelligence Branch report.

[Menashe] Does that mean that the question of negotiations with the PLO was not raised at all?

[Rabin] Negotiations with the PLO are a decision for the State of Israel. The Intelligence Branch does not offer operative recommendations to the Israeli Government.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 23 March reports that Defense Minister Rabin explained his opposition to talks with the PLO or a Palestinian state by saying: "It is not terror that prevents me from negotiating with the PLO, but firm opposition to a Palestinian state between Israel and Jordan." Rabin asserted that any Israeli declaration of willingness to negotiate with the PLO is "a de facto acceptance of the principle of a Palestinian state at the end of the political process."]

[Menashe] Defense Minister Rabin said that facing facts is unavoidable. Rabin pointed to the increase in the level of violence in the Gaza Strip this week.

[Rabin] This did not have any bearing, for example, on the level of violent activity in the southern part of the Gaza Strip. I estimate that in the coming days we will be approaching occasions such as Land Day [30 March]; besides, there is no doubt that political moves such as the prime minister's visit to the United States at the beginning of April spur an escalation in the violence. I believe we shall overcome this problem and lower the level of violence in the Gaza Strip in comparison to the last 4 days.

[Menashe] The chief of staff has, for the time being, rejected the navy's intention to procure submarines. You have appointed a committee. Were 8 and ½ years of committees and deliberations insufficient?

[Rabin] First of all, it is true that the chief of staff recommended delaying the construction of the submarines. This is not because he or the General Staff discount them, but because of budgetary constraints that stem from this year's cut in the defense budget. Look, the defense budget for 1989 is 120 million shekels less than the 1988 budget. Our budget now is lower than the budget level before the uprising. We did not receive any supplementary funds for 1989, while in 1988 we got 100 million shekels. I have no doubt that the Israel Defense Forces, and indeed the entire defense establishment, face a severe budgetary squeeze. This is an issue that I, according to the government's decision, intend to raise before the finance minister, and if necessary before the entire government plenum. I will request an increase in the defense budget, and if the defense budget is raised I believe that the submarine issue will also be resolved.

[Menashe] What if the budget is not raised?

[Rabin] I do not wish to use this forum to explain the implications of such a move. It would be harmful to Israel's security.

Shamir on Analysis Report, Peres Plan, PLO

TA2303094189 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0805 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Telephone interview with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir by anchorman Razi Barqay on the "It Is All Talk" program—live]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] [Barqay] Let us move on to politics, which is still our main subject. There was a newspaper report today that a political plan is being drawn up in the office of Shim'on Peres, the vice prime minister and finance minister, which will be presented after your return from the United States. The plan calls for some type of Palestinian entity. Have you heard about it?

[Shamir] No. I only heard about it this morning on the Voice of Israel and saw it in the papers. I have also heard denials. I cannot address something vague over which there are doubts as to whether it exists at all, or how much of the reporting on it is true.

[Barqay] Nevertheless, Mr Shamir, an Intelligence Branch report was indeed submitted, regardless of your statements 2 or 3 days ago.

[Shamir] I never said that the report did not exist. There are plenty of documents. Naturally, these documents also include assessments. I said that everything that had been reported regarding advice, instructions, and the like is untrue.

[Barqay] Still, the spirit of the document—which I regret to say I have not read—is that the PLO constitutes an integral part of the Middle East scene. Is that an accurate quotation?

[Shamir] I do not remember such a quote, but you can hear such assessments right, left, and center. People are constantly saying that that organization is part of the Middle East reality. But then no one has ever doubted that!

[Barqay] So how can one make peace without that organization?

[Shamir] With all due respect, we do not think that peace should be made with all the existing elements in the area. After all, there are some elements that constitute an obstacle to peace.

[Barqay] In other words, you are saying that in your still-unchanged opinion the PLO must remain outside the picture?

[Shamir] First of all, this has nothing do with your earlier question on some document which may or may not exist. If we are talking about my opinion on that organization, I regard it as an obstacle to peace. I regard it as an element that is not interested in peace. It wants the opposite of peace. It wants to continue the fight against Israel's existence in better and more propitious conditions.

[Barqay] Mr Shamir, do you trust the professionalism and objectivity of the Intelligence Branch personnel?

[Shamir] Almost always, but one must always take things with a grain of salt, as there may be exceptions to the rule. Generally speaking, however, the Intelligence Branch staff is fortunately marked for its outstanding professional level.

[Barqay] But this document, which was presented to you and the Inner Cabinet...

[Shamir, interrupting] I cannot address a document whose content was leaked by someone who committed a gross violation of law.

[Barqay] Do you intend to investigate the leak and find the person who did it?

[Shamir] I hope we will reach the point where the truth will come out.

[Barqay] It sounds as though you have instructed the pertinent bodies to look into how this document was leaked.

[Shamir] I did not say that.

[Barqay] So how will we get at the truth?

[Shamir] I hope we will.

[Barqay] Could it have been leaked from an unexpected source in a bid to cause excitement, not necessarily from the source whom I understand your men suspect?

[Shamir] I have no idea what my men have told you. I do not refer to suspicions. In general, I would say that we should forget about this issue and not discuss it so extensively.

[Barqay] Let us do precisely that and discuss the Prime Minister's Conference on Jewish Solidarity, which ended last night. Do you regard that meeting as a show of total U.S. Jewish support for you in anticipation of your U.S. trip?

[Shamir] I never asked anyone to show absolute backing for me. I merely wanted to emphasize and strengthen the firm link that exists between Israel and the Jewish people throughout the world. This conference manifested the solidarity between the Jewish people and the State of Israel, which various elements—Jewish and non-Jewish alike—are constantly trying to undermine and destroy.

[Barqay] Mr Shamir, even your supporters among the U.S. Jewish community and from all over the world who congregated here in Jerusalem recommended that you leave for the United States armed with what they—and all of us—call new ideas.

[Shamir] What do you mean by the phrase your supporters? There were many participants there whom I met for only the first time and with whom I never discussed political issues. Nevertheless, I could sense their devotion to Israel, their concern for it, and that is actually what I am interested in. If people make a comment or offer a piece of advice, I accept it lovingly because it expresses their concern and their link, or to put in colloquial Hebrew, it shows how much they care.

[Barqay] But this concern of theirs has led them to advise you, to recommend to you, that you come to the United States with what they term new ideas.

[Shamir] Well, there are all sorts of recommendations, including some which are significantly different from the ones you mentioned. This is irrelevant. I accept any comment or advice with love.

[Barqay] You know I am trying to ask you whether you really intend to depart with new ideas.

[Shamir] Look, I will try to come to the United States with some proposals and ideas that will contribute to tightening the cooperation with the United States in everything related to the efforts to promote peace in our area.

[Barqay] So you do not fear a rift with the United States after your visit?

[Shamir] I do not want such a schism. After all, the special relations we have managed to establish with the U.S. Administration are a tremendous and extremely important asset that we cherish.

[Barqay] Mr Shamir, what happens if the United States rejects your ideas? What happens then?

[Shamir] Look, it is a fact that interspersed in the overall fabric of relations with the United States there are also differences of opinion. They can exist and are tolerated only thanks to the quality of our relationship, which is to say thanks to the warm and special friendship between the two countries. This allows for differences of opinion on certain matters. Some differences of opinion have always existed, for example regarding the status of Jerusalem or Israel's borders. There was never full understanding between the Government of Israel and the U.S. Administration on these issues. We used to discuss these matters periodically and agree that there is a disagreement, but we still moved on and cooperated on those issues over which there is agreement between us. This is how it has been, and this is how it will continue to be.

[Barqay] Finally, I would like to ask you about the government under your leadership, which has now been in office for several months. Over the last few weeks there have been a number of occasions on which your partners, the Labor Party, have called for the opening of negotiations with the PLO. Do you not believe that the current constellation of the government and the prevailing practices have exhausted themselves, and that perhaps it is time to break the partnership?

[Shamir] God forbid! I think that precisely in the current situation, when Israel is the object of unbridled and vicious attacks, it is of utmost importance for Israel to appear united in the eyes of the world despite the difficulties and the occasional cracks. The very fact that Israel has a broad-based government of national unity works in our favor everywhere, among friend or foe. Therefore, I do not believe that we should make efforts to eliminate this positive factor.

At the same time, despite the jarring notes that can occasionally be heard, I can say that as in the past, the Labor Party adheres to the agreed-upon basic guidelines of the national unity government.

[Barqay] Mr Prime Minister, what shall we wish you? How about a fruitful trip to the United States?

[Shamir] Thank you very much.

[Barqay] Good morning.

[Shamir] Good day.

Shamir Unworried About Possible U.S. Pressure

TA2303125789 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1230 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir referred today to the political plan attributed to Shim'on Peres. Shamir said: I do not think the issue should be discussed, since there are doubts as to whether such a plan exists at all.

Referring to the proposal that the United States should enter the territories and to the possibility that the United States may pressure Israel, the prime minister said: We need not worry.

[Begin Shamir recording] I do not believe any pressure will be exerted on us, since the United States knows very well that we are not a suitable target for pressures and that such methods have no influence over us. [end recording]

The prime minister made these remarks at the Weizman Institute in Rehovot; they were reported by our correspondent Shay Treitel.

Arens on 3 Points of 'Consensus' With Baker

TA2303124189 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1105 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Foreign Minister Moshe Arens launched an uncharacteristic and scathing personal attack on Labor Knesset Member [MK] Avraham Burg. He told Burg that he still has a lot to learn about the United States. Arens asked Burg why, considering his ideas, he cannot find it in himself to join the opposition?

[Begin Arens recording] I assume that it will sadden him [Burg] to hear this, but it is still worth hearing. During my visit to the United States, we formed a broad consensus with Secretary of State Baker based on three principles. First of all, we agree that the United States and Israel must work together. The furthering of the peace process depends on our agreeing with each other. Without such agreement, any development in the peace process is unlikely. Second, we both agree that the emphasis should be placed on direct negotiations. Not on the plan formulated by your boss [Shim'on Peres], MK Burg, which proposes an international conference, but on direct negotiations between the various parties. This is not just the position held by the Israeli Government, it is also the opinion of the United States. Third, Israel and the United States agree that concentrated efforts should be exerted to find interlocutors among the Palestinians living in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, not with the PLO. [end recording]

Arens said that the PLO is continuing to perpetrate terrorist activities against Jews and against Palestinians in the territories. Arens added that Jordan should be persuaded to join the peace process. [passage omitted]

Government Seen Accepting U.S.-PLO Dialogue

TA2303113489 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 23 Mar 89 p 2

[Editorial: "Deeds Rather Than Words"]

[Text] Yesterday's second official meeting between the United States and the PLO lacked dramatic elements, unlike the first round of talks, which astonished and surprised the Israeli Government.

The fact that official Jerusalem did not issue any condemnation or protest shows that we have already come to terms with the new political reality. Following the initial shock and feeling of disappointment, the government apparently realized that it had no other choice, and that not only would it have to get used to the new political process, but it would even have to find some rays of light in it.

The Intelligence Branch report stating that the PLO is behind the intifadah [uprising], organizing and inciting it, is slowly bringing the government to understand that the uprising in the territories will only be solved by political means, rather than military measures.

The results of the meeting in Tunis and its effect on events in the field will prove whether the moderation the Americans have detected in the PLO is genuine and not just rhetorical. If the PLO wants to persuade Israeli public opinion of the justness of its cause, it has only one way to proceed: stop terror and enable the leaders of the territories to enter direct negotiations with Israel.

U.S. Policy 'Suddenly Veered Off Course'

TA1403150789 Jerusalem AL-SHA'B in Arabic 14 Mar 89 pp 1, 7

[Editorial: "Searching for the Roots"]

[Text] In the first official high-level meeting between the U.S. Administration and Israel since President George Bush's assumption of the U.S. Presidency, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens met yesterday with his U.S. counterpart, James Baker. The talks between the two sides focused on the means of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East and the recent U.S. proposals to end the intifadah [uprising]. These proposals were based on an unfair equating by the U.S. Administration, which should have adopted a more objective stance and addressed the roots of the conflict so that a just, durable, and comprehensive settlement of the region's crisis would be reached.

It is noteworthy that, at a time when the U.S. Administration is welcoming Arens and is getting ready to receive the Israeli prime minister next month, it confirmed that the second round of the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue will soon begin. Apparently this is a message to Israel's leaders to cease their attempts aimed at undermining the dialogue between Washington and the PLO, and to present rational and practical proposals for launching the peace process. This is what Baker asked of his Israeli counterpart yesterday, stressing to him that Shamir has to bring practical proposals during his visit to the U.S. capital next month.

It seems that this positive trend, which has begun appearing in U.S. policy toward the crisis in the region, suddenly veered off course when the U.S. Administration equated the peaceful intifadah and the internationally condemned Israeli measures. This is because the "approach of unfair equivalence" proposed by Washington in its mediation is incompatible with the growing international support for the Palestinian people. We are observing the positive expression of this support through statements made by many world officials affirming the right of the Palestinian people to gain their legitimate rights.

The proposals made by the United States to Israel, represented in the reopening of schools, the release of detainees, and halting deportations, should not be linked to any reciprocal conditions, because all these measures are, first of all, inconsistent with international mores and charters; second, they are the consequences of the intifadah. If the U.S. Administration is really eager to advance the peace process, it should address the roots and causes of the conflict without entering into the labyrinth of seeking interim solutions to the consequences.

Interior Minister: No Citizenship for Pollards

TA2303104889 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1000 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Interior Minister Arye Der'i said that he has no intention of granting the Pollards Israeli citizenship unless circumstances change. Der'i made these remarks following a meeting with Jonathan Pollard's parents in Jerusalem. Our correspondent 'Adi Malul reports that Pollard's parents appeared pleased after their meeting with Minister Der'i and reported that the talk was warm and encouraging.

IDF's Baraq on Dangers From Eastern Front

TA2203191389 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] The deputy chief of staff, Major General Ehud Baraq, says Israel must pay attention to Iraqi deeds, not words, in order to determine whether Iraq seeks the path of peace or war as a means of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Talking to delegates at the Prime Minister's Solidarity Conference in Jerusalem, Gen Baraq said Iraq is now strengthening and rearming its forces, as are other Arab countries around Israel. The potential of a hostile eastern front emerging must be taken into consideration, Baraq said, although he does not see any conflict, even with Syria, as being imminent or certain:

[Begin Baraq recording] Even if not immediate, it cannot be ignored: the possibility in the future of a united front against Israel from the east consisting of Iraq, Syria, and under some and certain circumstances even Jordan and Saudi expeditionary forces. Such a coalition, once established, will have more tanks than NATO, and a comparable number of aircraft. At the moment it appears that only Syria is capable at short notice, within the next year or two, of going to war. We don't want a confrontation, and it is avoidable. However, Syria is controlled by an absolute ruler who is constantly preparing himself for a showdown with us, which could come to pass. Therefore we must maintain a combination of early warning capabilities and a high level of combat readiness in the Golan

Heights. We hope that this will suffice to deter Syria from opening war—and we don't think that war with Syria is imminent. I repeat, we don't think it is imminent. [end recording]

PRC Expects Goodwill Gesture to Palestinians

TA2003160089 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 20 Mar 89 p 4

[Report by Rome correspondent Yosi Bar]

[Excerpt] The PRC expects Israel to take the initiative and make a gesture of goodwill toward the Palestinians, Song Ping, head of the Chinese delegation and the international secretary of the Communist Party of China, who is attending a convention of the Italian Communist Party, told me.

I met Song Ping in the lobby of the Sheraton Hotel where the 85 delegations that were invited to Rome to attend the convention are staying. The head of the Chinese delegation was taken aback by the Israeli journalist's approach. He hesitated for a while, finally agreeing to reply to only two questions.

Referring to the future of Israeli-PRC relations, Song Ping said: "I hope Israel will make concessions, just as the PLO has. It is now Israel's turn." Song Ping added that he expects openmindedness on Israel's part. "Only then will it be possible to talk about the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries."

When I asked him whether there are unofficial contacts between Israel and the PRC, Song Ping nodded with his head and smiled but refused to elaborate. He nevertheless said he hoped the current contacts would yield results. I received further confirmation about the contacts between Israel and the PRC from Yisra'el Gat, the Alignment official in charge of foreign relations, who is also attending the convention.

"The head of the Chinese delegation explained his country's position to me," Gat said. According to Gat, Song Ping does not understand why we use such severe measures to quell the intifadah [uprising]. The convention was conveniently used by Gat and representatives of the CRM [Citizens Rights Movement] and MAPAM [United Workers' Party] for meetings with representatives of countries with which Israel does not maintain diplomatic relations. [passage omitted]

Protocol Signed for Direct Flights to Poland

TA2303162689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1600 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Direct flights by El Al to Poland will be inaugurated on Monday. Lot, the Polish airlines, will inaugurate its flight next Thursday. Our correspondent Menahem Friedman reports that the two countries today signed a protocol and expressed certainty that the the way has now been paved for the speedy renewal of relations.

Spanish Culture Minister Arrives on Visit

TA1703143189 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 17 Mar 89 p 2

[ITIM report]

[Excerpt] "We will probably discuss political issues in my meetings with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir, Vice Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, and Chief of Staff Dan Shomron, but I will do so as a friend of Israel," Spanish Culture Minister Jorge Semprun y Maura stated last night at the beginning of a 5-day official visit to Israel.

"I hope Spain can be of assistance in the peace process, but mainly I want to hear whether there have been any developments since the Spanish foreign minister visited here," he said.

Semprun y Maura was greeted at the airport by Yitzhaq Navon, deputy prime minister and education minister. The Spanish guest will also confer with President Hayim Herzog and will be awarded an honorary doctorate by Tel Aviv University. [passage omitted]

Agreement With Spain Announced

TA2003172289 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 20 Mar 89

[Text] Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Culture Yitzhak Navon and Spanish Minister of Culture Jorge Semprun y Maura have decided to establish in their respective countries cultural centers that will engage in cultural, educational and artistic activities. The ministers announced their decision at the conclusion of the Spanish minister's visit in Israel as a guest of Navon. They entrusted the Spanish Embassy in Israel and the Israeli Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Education and Culture with the task of implementing the decision. According to the agreement, an Israeli cultural center will be established in Madrid, and it is also conceivable that two Spanish cultural centers will be set up, one in Jerusalem and one in Tel Aviv.

Increased Cooperation With Japan Agreed Upon

TA1903125589 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 19 Mar 89 p 4

[Report by economic affairs correspondent Tzvi Zerahya]

[Text] Israeli-Japanese telecommunications cooperation will be increased, and professional delegations will be exchanged. The above was agreed upon by Communications Minister Gad Ya'aqobi and the new Japanese ambassador to Israel, Sadakazu Taniguchi, during their discussion of ways to promote bilateral telecommunications, postal, and public broadcast ties.

The Japanese ambassador pointed out that his country is greatly interested in examining Israeli communications development, and in fostering technological, satellite, and public broadcast relations.

Ya'aqobi said that his ministry has begun examining possibilities for consolidating joint projects with Japan. He pointed out that just like in Japan, the Israeli communications field is undergoing a speedy development process.

FRG Housing Minister Arrives for Ceremony

TA2003211489 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2100 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] Oscar Schneider, FRG regional planning, housing, and urban development minister, arrived in Israel this evening. Tomorrow he is to dedicate a special fountain in Bloomfield Park opposite Liberty Bell Park in Jerusalem. The fountain was donated by FRG Chancellor Helmut Kohl as a gesture for Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek and the city.

Danish Foreign Minister Arrives on Visit

TA2103172089 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] The Danish foreign minister arrived this evening for a 1-day visit to Israel. He will meet with the prime minister and the foreign minister and will discuss the situation in the region with them.

Our correspondent in Scandinavia Eliyahu Zehavi reports that on the eve of the visit, the Danish foreign minister said that it is important that Israel's isolation be averted, as such a development would be liable to render its positions more inflexible.

Defense Ministry Chief of France Mission Named

TA2003193189 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1800 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] Brigadier General Re'uven Hershco, director of the Defense Ministry's Budget Department, will be appointed head of the Defense Ministry mission in France. Our correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that Gen Hershco has served under seven defense ministers and has spent 7 years as budget adviser to the chief of staff.

'Arafat Criticized for Border Infiltrations

JN1903160889 Jerusalem in Arabic to the Arab World 1440 GMT 19 Mar 89

["Observation" by 'Ezra Shirazi]

[Text] The organization of Abu Musa [Sa'id Musa Muragha], which is one of the dissident organizations against Yasir 'Arafat and which is headquartered in Damascus—this Abu Musa organization has announced, according to a REUTERS report from Damascus, that its armed men carried out the infiltration attempt from Jordanian territory into Israel, in the Wadi 'Arava, in the Negev, the day before yesterday.

The prevailing opinion among observers is that this infiltration attempt, just as the infiltration attempt on the Egyptian-Israeli border near Rafah last week and the repeated infiltration attempts witnessed by the Lebanese-Israeli border during the past period, is within the framework of the attempts of the leaders of the anti-'Arafat organizations to make 'Arafat fail. These attempts are also part of the efforts to torpedo the new 'Arafatist course that is represented by the official commitments 'Arafat has made in the name of the PLO in the hearing of the whole world regarding renouncing all forms of terrorism, recognizing Israel's right to exist, and accepting UN Security Council Resolutions No 242 and 338.

There is no doubt that the aforementioned prevailing opinion is supported by some facts, for the repeated attempts carried out by various terrorist organizations to infiltrate into Israel in the past period—these attempts refute 'Arafat's claims that he speaks on behalf of all Palestinians wherever they may be. Moreover, these attempts refute the claims of 'Arafat's organization that it is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

If the aforementioned infiltration attempts give prominence to the fact that 'Arafat is unable to control the dissident organizations, the other fact is that 'Arafat has also demonstrated an inability to control all the organizations that are supposed to be loyal to him and whose leaders are supposed to be aides and allies to 'Arafat. It is to be recalled that Nayif Hawatimah, who is a major partner to 'Arafat and leader of the terrorist organization called the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], has overtly claimed direct responsibility for instructing groups of personnel of his organization to carry out infiltration attempts into Israel in the last period. Nayif Hawatimah has not only claimed this, but he has also directly and clearly announced that his organization is not meant by and that he will not abide by the official commitments Yasir 'Arafat has made toward renouncing all forms of terrorism.

Finally, we should stress that the aforementioned facts regarding the terrorist organizations, whether pro-'Arafat or anti-'Arafat organizations, were taken into consideration in Israel, including the deductions these facts entail. The question is that whether the Palestinians, who wholeheartedly aspire for ending their sufferings and for reaching an honorable and satisfactory solution to their problem, have taken or will take into consideration the said facts and the deductions and lessons they entail. The most important issue is, of course, to make sound deductions and learn from eloquent lessons.

Al-Asad Speech on Territorial Ambitions Decried

JN0903182289 Jerusalem in Arabic to the Arab World 1435 GMT 9 Mar 89

["Observation" by 'Ezra Shirazi]

[Text] Dear listeners: Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad is strange. Yesterday, he repeated the superstitious and cheap falsehood about Israel's alleged territorial ambitions, which envisage the establishment of a state extending from the Nile to the Euphrates. He also spoke of the nonexistent map that Israel's enemies claim is hung on one of the walls of the Israeli Knesset.

Yes, the Syrian president is odd, as he repeated the aforementioned superstition and cheap falsehood in the speech that he addressed to his people yesterday. The least that we can say about this speech is that it was full of falsehoods and anti-Israeli demagoguery.

Had this absurd superstition on Israel's alleged territorial ambitions, which envisages the establishment of a state extending from the Nile to the Euphrates, been voiced by an ignorant person who is driven into the darkness of his own ignorance, it could have been left unheeded or the ignorance and silliness of the one voicing it could have been made a laughingstock. However, to see this superstition voiced by a head of state and in an official speech that was fully covered by the electronic and printed word news media is a big disaster and a real catastrophe. This is especially the case when we realize that the one who reached this rock bottom of cheap falsehoods has been, along with the clique ruling with him in Syria, speaking as if he were the sole and only legitimate representative of the Arab nation extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf. Besides, these rulers have been behaving as if they were the smartest and wisest of all Arab rulers and as if their opinions and policies are the supreme and absolute criterion according to which the degree of sincerity or treason of all Arab rulers, nay all Arabs, is measured.

Yes, the Syrian president is really odd. He is odd as he resorts from time to time to repeating such manifestations of demagoguery and such low falsehoods, which are no longer believed by anybody except the naive and the mentally retarded.

The attention of President Hafiz al-Asad must be drawn to the fact that resorting to the propagation of this silly and worn-out lie regarding Israel's alleged territorial ambitions, which envisage the establishment of a state extending from the Nile to the Euphrates, is not at all becoming of his standing and position. If this shows anything, it shows moral bankruptcy and a lack of logic.

For many years, even the silliest demagogues among media men in various Arab states have refrained from repeating this cheap falsehood.

Additional Work Permits for Lebanese Denied

TA2303101789 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0900 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Israel has rejected a request by the residents of the security zone to increase the number of southern Lebanese inhabitants allowed to work in Israel. The requests were made in view of the security zone's severe employment crisis. Our correspondent Yo'el Dar reports that representatives of the Employment Services said that 10,000 Jews and Arabs in northern Israel are already on relief.

19 Percent See 'Chance' for Peace With PLO

TA2303101989 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Mar 89 p 3

[Text] The Israeli public perceives the chances of peace with the PLO and the Arab countries, with the exception of Jordan, as being very dim. This emerges from a nationwide public opinion poll conducted by the Pori Institute and commissioned by HA'ARETZ.

Only 19 percent believe there is some chance of attaining peace with the PLO. Even fewer than that, 13.9 percent, believe there is a chance of attaining peace with Iraq; 17.7 percent believe there is a chance with Syria; and 37.9 percent believe there is a chance of attaining peace with Lebanon.

Further on Incidents, Casualties in Territories

Firebomb Thrown Near Biddiya

TA2203184789 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1800 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] A Molotov cocktail was thrown near the village of Biddiya in Samaria this evening. This is reported by our correspondent Moti Amir. There were no casualties, and no damage was caused.

Arabs who live in the Qalandiyah area north of Jerusalem claim that a group of settlers damaged Arab cars this evening. Our police affairs correspondent Moshe Nussbaum reports that according to these Arabs, the settlers arrived in two cars and smashed the windshields of five Arab cars parked in the area. They also claimed that the settlers threatened them with weapons. According to the Arabs, soldiers riding in an Israel Defense Forces [IDF] jeep traveling through the area recorded the license numbers of the Israeli cars. The IDF is investigating.

5 Gazans Hurt in Disturbances

TA2203184989 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1830 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Five Arabs from the Gaza Strip were wounded today when IDF soldiers dispersed disturbances. A local youth tried to snatch a weapon from an IDF soldier, but failed. This is reported by our correspondent in the south Roni Sofer.

Soldier Wounded in Gaza

TA2203204289 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 2030 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] A 20-year-old Israel Defense Forces soldier was slightly wounded by a stone thrown in the Gaza Strip this evening. The condition of the soldier, who was wounded above his eye, is described as good to fair. The soldier was hospitalized in the eye ward of Barzilay Hospital in Ashqelon.

More on 22 Mar Incidents

TA2303105989 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 23 Mar 89 pp 1, 10

[Report by Joel Greenberg and Mikhal Sela']

[Excerpts] An 11-year-old boy was killed yesterday during heavy clashes between protesters and troops in the Tulkarm area as Palestinians in the territories observed a general strike marking the anniversary of the U.S. decision to close the PLO's office in Washington. [passage omitted]

At least 43 Palestinians were also reported wounded in yesterday's clashes. [passage omitted]

In the Gaza Strip, 26 Palestinians were shot and wounded during a day that included a general strike and a curfew on all refugee camps. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] put the the number of casualties at five, including someone who tried to take a weapon from a soldier.

The head of Civil Administration in the Gaza Strip, Tat-Aluf [Brigadier General] Arye Shiffman, met with 50 Moslem clerics to discuss recent incidents of shooting near and inside mosques. On Saturday, three Palestinians were shot and killed, and 17 wounded in and near the Al-Shaykh Radwan mosque in Gaza. A Giv'ati Brigade platoon commander has been removed from his post by OC [Officer in Charge] Southern Command Yitzhaq Mordekhay.

Shiffman told the clerics that they are responsible for keeping inciters out of the mosques, while he himself would keep the soldiers out. He warned the clerics that any mosque becoming a refuge for stone throwers would be closed. [passage omitted]

UNRWA [UN Relief and Works Agency] announced yesterday that it would provide "some basic education" to pupils left idle by the enforced closure of West Bank schools.

The organization said it would arrange for teachers to visit pupils in refugee camps and other communities, to distribute educational materials and give guidance on their use.

A senior defence official said UNRWA's programme was under consideration, but the authorities would bar unilateral measures which are not coordinated with, and approved by, Israel.

Curfews Lifted in Part of Gaza

TA2303102489 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0800 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] The curfews have been lifted in the Gaza Strip except for the Al-Burayj and Al-Shati' refugee camps, and the Al-Shaykh Radwan neighborhood. Our correspondent Arye Gus reports that workers from the Gaza Strip left for their jobs in Israel this morning as usual.

3 West Bank Residents Hurt

TA2303113689 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Three residents of the village of Salim in the Nabulus district were wounded in stoning incidents in the territories this morning. They were rushed to Al-Ittihad Hospital in Nabulus. The Bethlehem marketplace, where reservist Gadi Amzaleg was stabbed approximately 2 weeks ago, was reopened today. The area had been closed since the stabbing. Our correspondent 'Ido Shargil reports that in a meeting today between the deputy governor of the Bethlehem area and approximately 30 merchants from the area, the former reported that the Civil Administration decided to reopen the marketplace in honor of Easter and the month of Ramadan.

4 PFLP 'Terrorists' Sentenced

TA2303165989 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1600 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] The Lod military court has sentenced four terrorists of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine to life imprisonment. The four were convicted of trying to infiltrate into Israel via Lebanon last summer; they gave themselves up after an all-night clash with an Israeli army force. Our correspondent Yisra'el Peres reports that two of the terrorists come from Syria; the two others came from Lebanon.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT 23 March adds that "Yasir Mahmud Muhammad Husayn of Rafah was given a life sentence by a Gaza military court today after being convicted of stabbing three wardens at Gaza prison last July, our correspondent Ori Sofer reports. The judge ruled that Husayn acted with the clear intention of taking revenge on the security forces for arresting his brother."]

New Mosad Chief Assumes Post 19 Mar

TA1903084789 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0800 GMT 19 Mar 89

[Text] This morning the ceremony marking the end of the term of office for the former head of the Mosad, and the new head's assumption of the post, was held at the prime minister's office. It was officially announced on this occasion that the former Mosad chief was Nahum Admoni.

Our correspondent Arye Golan reports that the prime minister thanked him warmly for 35 years of service in the Mosad, of which he served as chief for the last 6 and ½ years. Admoni's next position has not been reported. The name of the new Mosad head remains classified.

Number of Hajj Pilgrims To Increase

TA2303102689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0600 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] The number of Muslims leaving Israel this year to participate in the hajj to Mecca amounts to 6,350. This is a 10-percent increase over last year. Our correspondent Yo‘el Dar reports that one of the factors contributing to this increase is the resurgence of religious feeling among Israel's Muslim population.

Drug Seizures, Arrests Reported 13-17 Mar

TA1803080489

[Editorial report] Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew on 13 March in a page 8 report by Buqi Na‘e reports that "Yafo police detectives last night seized 86 grams of heroin from an Arab drug dealer."

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 15 Mar in a page 1 report by Asher Wallfish reports that according to police estimates "at least 40,000 drug peddlers are operating in Israel." A senior police officer says that "the drugs are coming into the country across every border," adding that "drugs are entering Israel by sea and by air, but vehicles are the most effective way of importing drugs."

Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 15 March reports that a Nazareth court sentenced a Galilee Arab to 13 years in prison after convicting him of selling 1 kg of heroin to a policeman, adding that "the accused was arrested a year ago on the Lebanese border shortly after he sold the drug to the policeman for $70,000."

Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0830 GMT on 16 March reports that "the Valleys district police last night detained 23 people suspected of dealing and using drugs." The report adds that the suspects were found in possession of drugs and smoking tools.

Tel Aviv MA‘ARIV in Hebrew on 16 March in a page A9 report by Gid‘on Meron reports that an Abu Kabir prison warden managed to foil an attempt to smuggle heroin into the prison. While searching suspicious visitors, the warden discovered "pure heroin weighing 3.5 grams, which is enough to make 80 drug units."

Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1430 GMT on 16 March reports that "the Jerusalem Police intelligence and detectives bureau seized approximately 12 kg of heroin last night." The heroin, estimated to value $2 million, was smuggled in from Lebanon. Nine suspects have been arrested so far in what the police believe to be "one of the largest drug seizures ever in Israel."

Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 17 March reports that three people "are accused of having smuggled 3 tons of hashish from southern Lebanon to Israel." The drug was seized and the three were detained about a month ago, but the affair was publicized only today.

Fire Control, Vision Systems Developed for Army

TA1903081689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0700 GMT 19 Mar 89

[Text] The El-Op and Elbit companies have developed a progressive fire control system, called Abir, for the Israeli Army M-60 and Centurion battle tanks. Our military affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe notes that the system substantially improves the performance of the tanks' weapon systems and night and day identification of targets in both static and mobile situations.

Another system developed by Elbit is a computerized vision system which is one of the most progressive of its kind in the world. The system simulates animal, mainly mammal, vision and shows shapes, colors, and relative motion in the field in two and three dimensions.

Purchase of British Tornado Aircraft Suspended

JN2303113689 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] In Amman Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i said his country has decided to suspend negotiations to purchase eight British Tornado aircraft because of Jordan's financial situation. Al-Rifa'i said Jordan informed the British Government that it wishes to suspend the talks in the hope of resuming them in the future under more favorable financial circumstances. He added that the British Government expressed understanding of Jordan's position and agreed to its request.

King Husayn Telephoned by Mubarak, Al-Asad

JN2203213589 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn received a telephone call this evening from Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak. The two leaders exchanged views on a number of pan-Arab issues of common interest.

His majesty also received a telephone call from Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad during which the two Arab leaders exchanged views.

Paper Criticizes Arab League, Suggests Reforms

JN2303093089 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 23 Mar 89 p 4

[Editorial: "At 44, Arab League Requires Face-Lift"]

[Text] The Arab League's 44th anniversary which fell on Wednesday should have been an occasion to spell out operational ideas on how to invigorate this Arab organisation. That the League as presently constituted leaves much to be desired is an understatement. Unfortunately the Arab League has been left by its member states to atrophy the years to the point that has rendered it less relevant than ever in the conduct of inter-Arab relations. In more than one way, this benign neglect of the Arab League has rendered it impotent in dealing not only with crises and conflicts between the Arab World and foreign powers but also in dealing with inter-Arab disputes.

In this vein, the Arab League submits, and rightly so, that the League is what the Arab states would want it to be, nothing more and nothing else. Some Arab states would demur and argue that over and above the proposition that the Arab League is an accurate reflection of what its members want it to be, the League itself can do a lot more to become more potent and relevant in dealing with issues affecting the Arab countries and their peoples. It has been suggested many times in this context that even under the prevailing conditions, the Arab League has the potential to become much more dynamic in addressing subjects affecting the Arab World. That is why one would have thought that an occasion like the 44th anniversary of the League would have been a propitious occasion to announce new measures that would render the Arab League more forceful and meaningful in its ways within and without the Arab member states.

For example, the Arab League can save much needed funds by closing down several of its offices in capitals where there is ample presence of Arab embassies. It is common knowledge that where there are sufficient number of Arab diplomats, there is really no need for an Arab League secretariat to organise meetings between them. Its presence in such capitals is truly redundant. This has been amply proven in capitals like Ankara where the Arab diplomatic community was able to conduct its inter-Arab functions and diplomatic missions just as well without the benefit of an Arab League bureaucracy. The Arab League would be better advised to spend its meager resources in other avenues where it stands to reap much more tangible results. The main Arab League secretariat in Tunis can use new blood in the form of proficient Arab experts in different fields in order to render the head office more efficient and dynamic. The Arab World does not need just an Arab civil servants force which is not sufficiently motivated or versed in matters that are of great interest to the Arab World. There must be, therefore, more turn over in senior personnel to allow opportunities for younger people with new perspectives and ideas. Otherwise the Arab League would become a rather fossilised creature geared only to serve fossilised ideas and perspectives.

To be sure there are many other avenues open to the Arab League to rectify its course and amend its ways. The best way is to form an inter-Arab committee of experts to deal with this task of revamping the Arab League from head to toe. The 44th anniversary of the Arab league could have been just the occasion to announce the formation of such a committee.

North Yemen Electricity Minister Arrives

JN2203165889 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Amman—Engineer Muhammad Jamal, minister of electricity and water in the Yemen Arab Republic, arrived in Amman today with a delegation on a visit of several days to Jordan. The visiting minister will hold talks with the minister of energy and mineral wealth and the minister of water and irrigation, on advancing bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy, water, and irrigation.

Oil Agreement Signed With Austrian Firm

JN2303085489 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 23 Mar 89 p 20

[Excerpts] Amman—PETRA—An agreement on cooperation in the field of oil exploration was signed yesterday between the Natural Resources Authority [NRA] and the Austrian National Oil Company.

According to the agreement, the company will carry out explorations at its own expense for 18 months, beginning yesterday, in a 5,500-square-meter area southeast of Al-Sarhan in the eastern part of the kingdom. [passage omitted]

An NRA technical team will participate in all phases of the operation.

The agreement was signed by Engineer Kamal Juraysat, NRA director General, and Dr Herman Schborker [name as published], director of exploration and international activities in the Austrian company.

'Awn Stresses Need for Syrian Withdrawal

NC2303075689 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn stated last night that the siege which the Syrian forces are imposing on the eastern areas is increasing the risk of a military confrontation and has also increased his determination to secure the withdrawal of the Syrian occupation forces from Lebanon.

In an interview with AFP, 'Awn added that it is impossible for him to retreat. He said: We are now moving in one direction, toward liberation, and have crossed the dividing line. He reiterated that the only possible solution lies in the withdrawal of the Syrians from Lebanon, since there is no longer any way to coexist with the Syrians.

Commenting on the closure of all the crossing points, 'Awn accused the Syrians of trying to starve the Lebanese people and partition the country.

Referring to provocations against the eastern area, the prime minister said that a new wave of violence would take place if the Syrians continue their pressures through artillery shelling. I will not accept a situation in which we are subject to provocations every morning, noon, and night, he said.

Gen 'Awn said: We want to liberate Lebanon from Syrian and Israeli occupation. We want to get rid of the Syrians in order to liberate the south, because they are the ones who constitute the real obstacle to liberating the south. He reiterated that cease-fire negotiations can only be conducted through a Lebanese-Syrian military committee. This proposal, he pointed out, has so far not been accepted by the other side.

Answering a question about the Syrian radio's political commentary which called for the removal of Gen 'Awn in order to achieve a solution in Lebanon, 'Awn said: Let Hafiz al-Asad step down from power; this would be the best thing for the Middle East, Lebanon, and Syria, too.

'Awn maintained that international diplomacy has recently been very active concerning the situation in Lebanon. However, he thought that such things as the closure or opening of the ports must not be discussed on the international level, but among the Lebanese. He added that the only matter which must be discussed on the international level is the withdrawal of the Syrians from Lebanon.

While maintaining that Syria has no Arab support, 'Awn called on the five permanent member states at the UN Security Council to honor their own decisions regarding the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon. 'Awn expressed his surprise that the decision to close the illegal ports in Lebanon has so far not received support from all the countries in the world which have announced their desire to stop drug trafficking. He reiterated his determination to maintain the naval operations room.

Clashes Continue Between Army, Occupation Forces

Shells Hit East Beirut Areas

NC2103111889 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1045 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] Four shells landed in the Furn al-Shubbak and Al-'Adliyah areas [in East Beirut] shortly before 1200 today. Three people—Qaysar Khuri, Za'im Tuma, and Elie Farah—were wounded and taken to the Hotel Dieu hospital. Another two shells fell on the racetrack. According to security sources, the shelling originated in Ra's al-Nab'.

It has been reported that residential areas in 'Ayn al-Rummanah have come under bursts of sniper fire from gunmen's positions in the suburb.

Gun Fire in Southern Suburb

NC2103151789 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] According to security sources, there have been exchanges of machinegun fire on the axes of Al-Tayyunah and Marun Misk Street in the southern suburb [of Beirut].

Shells Fall on Beirut Port

NC2103162789 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1545 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] The shelling of the eastern areas continues. The Beirut port area has been coming under intermittent shelling since 1720.

At 1540, a shell fell on the Beirut port from the Syrian emplacements in Burj al-Murr. The Kasrawan coast was the target of shelling at 1555. Another shell fell on the Beirut port area a short while ago.

In the meantime, clashes using heavy- and medium-caliber machineguns took place along the commercial markets' combat lines at the center of Beirut. The fighting is still in progress. Similar clashes took place in the afternoon along Al-Tayyunah combat line in Beirut's southern suburb in which machineguns were used.

5 Killed in W. Beirut Shelling

NC2103182389 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1730 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Excerpts] Shells fell on Ziqaq al-Balat, Wadi Abu Jamil, Al-Zaytunah, and Burj al-Murr [in West Beirut] this afternoon. Security sources say that 15 shells fell on these areas between 1620 and 1715. Five people were killed, and three others were wounded in the shelling. [passage omitted]

In the southern suburb, two shells fell at 1700 in Al-Shiyah. One shell fell on Al-Awza'i. At 1830, mortar shells fell on Al-Shiyah, injuring three persons.

Beirut Radio on 'Awn Maneuvers

NC2203072789 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Military sources affirm that, according to reports they have received, the army of the Al-Yarzah command [General Michel 'Awn's command] has, during the past 2 weeks, carried out two military maneuvers in connection with plans to enter West Beirut. The sources added that this army received a group of gunboats equipped with 12.7-mm guns from an Arab country recently. These gunboats participated in the naval part of the offensive maneuvers.

This provides sufficient justification for the adoption of countermeasures and for a response in kind to 'Awn's measures.

Fire at Commerical Markets

NC2203102589 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1000 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Tension is high on the combat lines in the capital, its southern suburb, and the mountain area. Rockets and machinegun fire are being directed at the nationalist positions, particularly in the commercial markets, from positions held by 'Awn's clique.

Security sources in the eastern area reported a short time ago that several shells have fallen on Beirut port.

Shelling From Eastern Area

NC2203110589 Beirut Voice of National Resistance in Arabic 1030 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] The Riyad al-Sulh area and the fringes of Zuqaq al-Balat have been coming under cencentrated heavy artillery shelling from the Al-Yarzah clique's emplacements in the eastern area since 1200 today. The citizens are asked to exercise caution in their movements.

Meanwhile, the land blockade is still being imposed on the eastern areas for the 2d successive day, in retaliation for the naval blockade Michel 'Awn is imposing on the nationalist areas.

Tanks Used in 'Violent' Clashes

NC2203114189 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Violent clashes involving the use of tanks took place in the old commercial area of Beirut between 1130 and 1230 today. Some shells landed in Beirut port, while others fell on the Kasrawan coast.

The fighting has subsided to some extent as of 1230, giving way to intermittent gunfire.

Clashes on Suq al-Gharb Front

NC2203114789 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] A short while ago, we received a report that the situation was disturbed along the Suq al-Gharb front at noon today. Skirmishes involving the use of heavy machineguns and sporadic exchanges of rockets are currently taking place there.

Beirut Port, Kasrawan Shelled

NC2203155789 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1515 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] The Beirut port continued to come under intermittent shelling this afternoon. The latest shelling was reported at approximately 1630, when three shells fell on the port area. The shelling was coupled with clashes along the old commercial markets' combat lines in which machineguns and flat-trajectory weapons were used.

At 1645, the Kasrawan coast was subjected to two grad rockets. A third rocket followed at 1705, and a fourth one was reported to have fallen 3 minutes ago. At 1700, there was a flare-up along the old Sidon road. Fighting broke out and continues along the Al-Shiyah-'Ayn al-Rummanah combat lines.

More Shelling on W. Beirut

NC2203160989 Beirut Voice of National Resistance in Arabic 1530 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] The 'Awn clique in East Beirut flared up the security situation after 1630 today when artillery shells landed on residential areas in West Beirut and the southern suburb. At 1700, the areas of Al-Tayyunah, Al-Barid, Mar Mikhayil Church, Al-Matahin, and Al-Hajjaj were violently bombarded with 120-and 155-mm artillery pieces.

Meanwhile, fierce fighting is raging along the old commercial markets' combat lines, and shells are landing on 'Ayn al-Muraysah, Zuqaq al-Balat, and [word indistinct]. A shell fell near the Kuwaiti Embassy in Bi'r Hasan.

More on Suq al-Gharb Skirmishes

NC2203164989 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1637 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Here is a flash we have just received from the news desk: Violent clashes are raging along the Suq al-Gharb combat lines. The area of Al-Kahhalah is coming under rocket and artillery fire, which reached the town of 'Arayya. Shells fell on the Kasrawan coast, the vicinity of B'abda, Al-Hadath, Al-Mansuriyah, and the Monte Verde a short while ago. Fighting is also taking place along the combat lines of the southern suburb, where shells are falling on some residential areas in 'Ayn al-Rummanah and its vicinity.

VOL Sums Up Fighting

NC2203204989 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] The Syrian fire has inflamed the Lebanese areas in horrible shelling operations, which are the most dangerous and expansive since 1984. The Syrian launchers have been pouring their fire on populated areas for more than 3 hours, causing fires and considerable damage to property. The launchers, particularly those installed in upper al-Matn, are still shelling the eastern area. Dozens of rockets have hit Kasrawan coast, mountain, and plain in the past 30 minutes. Several fires broke out, and three persons were wounded. The Syrian shelling operations are being answered appropriately.

In the meantime, violent clashes are taking place on the Dahr al-Wahsh, 'Alayh, and Suq al-Gharb axes. The concentrated shelling on this front is accompanied by an indiscriminate shelling which reached 'Arrayya, al-Kahhalah, and Al-Jumhur.

Security sources estimated the number of artillery and rocket shells have fallen since this morning at more than 2,000. Ten Syrian positions are using 40 stationery launchers in addition to mobile launchers mounted on trucks.

Syrian Artillery Posts Destroyed

NC2203205489 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in English 2044 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Ladies and Gentlemen: The Syrian artillery shelling of the eastern region, especially in Kasrawan, has been dealt with properly. Information just came in that two Syrian artillery positions in Tarshish were destroyed, and at the moment the area of Kasrawan is being shelled.

Syrian Emplacements Attacked

NC2203223389 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 2145 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Excerpts] The spiteful Syrian fire which inflamed the eastern areas tonight has comparatively receded since approximately 2200 after an indiscriminate shelling which the Lebanese have not experienced for several years, particularly after the Army answered the sources of aggression, inflicting direct hits.

Security sources narrated the Army's retaliation as follows: A Syrian emplacement in Tarshish was directly hit at 2200. Shells are still exploding in this emplacement. A Syrian convoy, which was on its way from Shtawrah to Dahr al-Baydar, was hit at 2220. Eight members of the convoy were killed, and 30 others were wounded.

A Syrian emplacement in Falughah-Ayn al-Sihhah was hit. A rocket launcher on Jisr Hammanah was destroyed. Three progressive Socialist Party gunmen were killed in the incident, and seven others were wounded.

It has been learned that a Syrian armored battalion has moved from Dahr al-Baydar to Kafr Silwan area in upper Al-Matn to reinforce the Syrian forces in the area. [passage omitted]

Before ending our news summary, we have a flash from the newsdesk: We were informed a short while ago that two rockets fell on Al-Matn coast. Violent shelling is now being directed at the areas of Brummanah, Bayt Miri, and 'Ayn Sa'adah. The areas of 'Ayn al-Rummanah, Al-Hadath, Al-Hazmiyah, and areas surrounding the Presidential Palace are also coming under shellfire. We point out that the two rockets which fell on Al-Matn coast wwere fied from Falughah and Qarnayil.

Therefore, as you must have noticed, the wave of shelling the eastern areas has been resumed after a period of comparative recession.

Update on Shellings, Casualties

NC2203230989 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 2245 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Excerpt] This is the latest picture of the security situation: The shelling on the areas of Kasrawan and Al-Matn has eased somewhat. However shells began pouring on the southern Al-Matn areas, particularly on 'Ayn al-Rummanah, Furn al-Shubbak, Badaru, Rumiyah, Al-Mukallis, Al-Mansuriyah, Al-Hadath, and Al-Yarzh vicinity since 2400. Some of the axes in the capital and suburb have flared up. Clashes are continuing on the mountain axes.

As for the losses in the eastern areas, the damage is considerable. Fires were reported. The only casualties reported are four people injured in the southern Al-Matn and two others in upper al-Matn. The latter two left the hospital following their treatment. [passage omitted]

Crossing Opens to Pedestrians

NC2303093989 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0900 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] A guarded calm prevails on the various combat lines in the capital and its southern suburb. Meanwhile, machinegun and rocket fire is being exchanged on the Suq al-Gharb combat lines.

In another development, an official source has announced that the Museum-Al-Barbir crossing was opened for pedestrians only as of 0800 today, as an exceptional measure. The Al-Madfun crossing was also opened, for citizens travelling from the eastern areas to Tripoli and the North only.

In the meantime, Beirut International Airport and Beirut port continue to be closed for the 10th successive day as all efforts and contacts failed to enable activities at the airport and port to get back to normal.

Shells on Kasrawan, Beirut Port

NC2303100789 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0945 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Two shells fell on the Kasrawan coast a short time ago. A third shell fell on the Al-Matn coast. The Beirut port area was also the target of two shells. It has been learned that some people have been wounded as a result of the treacherous shelling.

We have just been informed that a third shell fell in the Beirut port area a few minutes ago.

'Fierce Fighting' on Combat Lines

NC2303143189 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1415 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Fierce fighting is currently raging along the Al-Shiyah and 'Ayn al-Rummanah combat lines. Meanwhile, intermittent clashes are taking place along the old commercial markets lines.

Syrian Forces' Military Movements Reported

Close Crossing Points

NC2103083989 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0745 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] Syrian occupation forces today perpetuated the isolation of the Lebanese people by closing all crossing points leading to the North, Al-Biqa', and the South. They closed the crossings of Al-Madfun, 'Ayn al-Tuffahah, Bikfayya, and the ('Ayn al-Abu-Kafr 'Uqab) road, as well as the Museum and Franciscan crossings. Thus citizens are unable to move around in their own country. Radio Free Lebanon has learned that the diplomatic missions have sent reports to their governments on this situation now that it has become impossible for members of these missions to move between their offices in East and West Beirut.

Move 300 Troops Into W. Beirut

NC2103152589 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1446 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] A security source in Beirut has revealed to the BAYRUT NEWS AGENCY that at dawn today the Syrians brought 150 troops from Al-Biqa' units and another 150 troops from Al-Asad units into West Beirut. The troops, equipped with heavy-and medium-caliber weapons, were deployed between Al-Janah and Al-Ramlah al-Bayda' areas, where they set up 107-mm rocket launchers.

The same source added that other Syrian military reinforcements had been assembled in the Hamat airport in the north, including an armored brigade equipped with T-55 tanks, rocket launchers, field artillery, and mortars of various calibers. All mountain and coastal roads between the north and the eastern areas have been closed.

Vacate Southern Suburb

NC2203071189 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] The AL-DIYAR newspaper reports today that the Syrian forces vacated positions during the night in Beirut's southern suburb, particularly in Burj al-Barajinah, Al-Murayjah, Al-Ghadir circle, Al-Raml al-'Ali, Jam'i al-'Arab, Al-Ma'murah, 'Ayn al-Sikkah, the Al-Siba'i restaurant on Al-Raml Street, the Amal Movement headquarters at the Al-Ghadir circle, Cocodi, and Al-Raml al-'Ali mosque. Security sources are concerned that the Syrian step is a tactical one, and that the intention is to withdraw the Syrians from the area and embroil the forces there in a confrontation with East Beirut. According to these sources, the Syrians are seeking to consolidate the idea that the conflict in Lebanon is a civil one, rather than a conflict between Syrians and Lebanese.

Meanwhile, the Syrians have withdrawn from the 'Ayn al-Tuffah-Zighrin crossing point and handed it over to the Syrian Social Nationalist Party.

According to reports from West Beirut received last night, the Al-Sa'iqah organization, the pro-Syrian Fatah "The Uprising", and Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command have placed their gunmen at the disposal of the leftist parties as part of the pressure on the eastern areas.

Send 100 Tanks to W. Beirut

JN2203073089 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0650 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Mar (INA)—Information arriving in Nicosia from Beirut says that the Syrian regime has sent 100 tanks to West Beirut during the past 24 hours.

The newspaper AL-THAWRAH published a report from Nicosia here today that the Syrian regime has handed the tanks to groups affiliated to it so they can be used to escalate the explosive security situation in Lebanon which has been continuing for more than a week in order to undermine the Arab initiative to solve the Lebanese crisis.

Navy Reportedly Confronts Two Israeli Ships

JN2203160989 Kuwait AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM in Arabic 21 Mar p 24

[Text] Damascus, AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM—Syrian military sources have revealed that two Israeli navy ships came under Syrian artillery fire off the coast of Tartus in northern Syria at dawn the day before yesterday [19 March]. The sources said that the Syrian Navy fired two sea-to-sea missiles against the two Israeli ships.

The Syrian sources added that two Israeli Navy Saar missile-carrier corvettes entered Syrian territorial waters at dawn the day before yesterday off the coast of Tartus in northern Syria. They were confronted by Syrian coastal artillery, and two sea-to-sea missiles were fired. The two corvettes returned fire and withdrew from Syrian territorial waters to international waters.

The Syrian military sources said that two Syrian MiG-23 warplanes flew over the area after the incident.

The Syrian military sources stated that during the past few years, Israeli Navy ships have made many attempts to infiltrate Syrian territorial waters off the coast of Tartus, but have been confronted by the Syrian Navy's vigilance.

USSR Defense Minister To Visit 27 Mar

JN2303143689 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1415 GHMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Damascus—At the invitation of General Mustafa Talas, deputy commander in chief of the Army and Armed Forces, deputy prime minister, and defense minister, Soviet Defense Minister Dimitriy Yazov will visit the Syrian Arab Republic at the head of an official delegation next Monday [27 March].

Al-Asad Receives Polish Defense Minister

JN2303105089 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1015 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Polish Defense Minister General Florian Siwicki at 1030 today. The meeting was attended by General Mustafa Talas, deputy commander in chief of the Army and Armed Forces, deputy prime minister, and defense minister; and the Polish ambassador in Damascus. The talks dealt with the situation in the region and issues of common concern.

Paper Cited on 'Awn's 'Partitionist Plan'

JN2203075489 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0545 GMT 22 Mar 89

["Press Review"]

[Text] Under the headline "Lebanon Will Remain the Stronger in the Face of Conspiracy," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: The inflammatory step taken by Michel 'Awn to close many crossing points indicates his separatist and partitionist plan, which he officially initiated when he set up his separatist military government 6 months ago. His military planes also flew over the coast, the capital, and the southern suburbs in a new escalation led by the general.

Everyone who is interested in Lebanon knows very well that 'Awn is carrying out a conspiracy against Lebanon and the unity of its territory and people—a plan that he started by sparking violence in attempt to make a fait accompli of partitioning Lebanon in the midst of the disruption he created. But General 'Awn should know that Lebanon—people and homeland—has frustrated all previous attempts to disrupt and partition it, although great powers were behind the plan.

Concluding its editorial, AL-BA'TH says: Lebanon—homeland and people—will repudiate not only this general, but also everyone who wants or tries to tamper with Lebanon's unity, Arabism, and sovereignty. Lebanon will not bow to this arrogant individual who seeks the help of the enemies of the homeland and people.

Foreign Minister Al-Shar' Visits France

For French and Syrian media accounts of Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar''s visit to France, including meetings with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas and Foreign Trade Minister Jean-Marie Rausch, see the France section of the 22 March WEST EUROPE DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Afghanistan

Najibullah Interviewed on Opposition, Fighting

LD2203215689 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1630 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Telephone interview with President Najibullah by unidentified BBC correspondent on 20 March—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Mr President?

[Najibullah] Yes.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]?

[Najibullah] On my own behalf and on behalf of the Afghan people, I express congratulations to my compatriots, to our compatriot refugees, to all Muslim brothers of the homeland, and to you. In accordance with the principles of humanism and peace, you should be interested in establishing peace in Afghanistan on the arrival of a new year.

[Correspondent] We hope that the coming year will be a year of peace everywhere, including in Afghanistan.

[Najibullah] We also hope so.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] What is happening in Jalalabad now?

[Najibullah] The fighting in Jalalabad continues. As you know, a joint attack by the opposition groups and commandos and militia members was launched against Jalalabad from various directions. This attack was based on a plan prepared by [Pakistani] military intelligence. They intended to capture Jalalabad within 2 to 3 days. As you see, however, 2 weeks have passed. The battle is still going on and they have not succeeded. Since they have not achieved their goal, I believe it is time to ask them about the claims they made.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]?

[Najibullah] The reason is in our sound and peaceful policy and the fact that the Afghan people, including the opposition forces, refugees, and even commanders [of the opposition] inside Afghanistan, are tired of war. One other fundamental (?reason) is that the government which they recently formed was the result of the convening of a council, which was not supported by the eight-party alliance and the groups supporting Muhammad Zahir Shah. The refugees who attended returned disappointed. Commanders inside the country who went there returned dissatisfied. These commanders, who have shouldered the heavy burden of war, are dissatisfied with those scenarios. The fundamental reason is in this fact.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]?

[Najibullah] It is clear that if aggression and interference from abroad stops, and if the support and direct intervention by Pakistani militarists stops, we will be in control of the situation.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]?

[Najibullah] As I told you before, they wanted to capture Jalalabad in 3 days, but they have not succeeded in achieving this goal. Since we have been resisting bravely for 15 days, we believe that, despite the blatant and open intervention and aggression by Pakistan, we will be able to defend our country's eastern front.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct] ?

[Najibullah] Yesterday at a televised news conference, we introduced two Pakistani military intelligence officers and other military men captured in Jalalabad. This is indicative of the fact that they are directly participating in the war. The armed opposition groups are in the front line of battle and at the rear are the Pakistani militia and the Pakistani Armed Forces Divisions No 11 and 18 which fire heavy artillery and other assorted weapons at the city, mercilessly killing innocent women and children. These Pakistani divisions carry out logistic tasks as part of the rear guard. I believe this is an open violation of the Geneva accords. It is an open and blatant aggression. It is far from the principle of good-neighborliness and peaceful coexistence. We hope that the United Nations and the guarantors of the accords, the Soviet Union and the United States, will make Pakistan abide by its pledges and obligations.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct] ?

[Najibullah] I could tell you that with an average of 5,000 to 7,000 missiles and artillery rounds fired at the city each day one could say undoubtedly that the counterrevolutionaries or the armed opposition are not alone, but that the heavy artillery of the Armed Forces of Pakistan are participating at their rear in the aggressive war.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct] ?

[Najibullah] We have substantial information that commanders in the front are consistently telling their relatives and symphathizers that we are well aware that this war is not a jihad, but a war of Pakistan against Afghanistan. The Pakistanis are behind us and use us as cannon fodder, under pressure, against our own Afghans. As a result of seeing these open manifestations of direct aggression and intervention by the Pakistani military intelligence and the Pakistani militarists, a number of commanders have withdrawn from the war.

[Correspondent] If Pakistan continues its support for the mujahidin, what do you think of your future relations with Pakistan? Do you think that you might come to the conclusion that you must embark on military action against Pakistan, for example using your Air Force?

[Najibullah] Pakistan so far has taken steps which cause anxiety. As I said earlier, by displaying two Pakistani spies and other arrested individuals in the mass media we exposed Pakistan's plans. I think that this question should be referred to Pakistan. If they really attach importance to the restoration of peace in the region, they should think about the consequences of their actions.

[Correspondent] Do you regard the consequences of their actions, which may include the possibility [words indistinct] you might use missiles [words indistinct] against Pakistan?

[Najibullah] I am hoping that the United Nations and the guarantors—the United States and the Soviet Union—can prevent such blatant and direct aggression by Pakistan so that there will be no need for using any kinds of weapons.

[Correspondent] (?Do you think there might be a direct clash between you and Pakistan)?

[Najibullah] We support neither war nor the use of any kind of weapon. However, developments in the situation depend directly on subsequent actions by the Pakistani side.

[Correspondent] Mr President, what is the situation in Kabul at the moment, the food and security situation in Kabul?

[Najibullah] We are completely satisfied with the security situation in Kabul. Despite the difficult situation caused by the cold winter, the snow etc. and the occasional attacks carried out along the highways by some groups, to a large extent so far we have overcome these difficulties. At the moment, things are not as difficult as they were during those cold winter days.

[Correspondent] After the snow melts will those who are in charge of the opposition groups around Kabul resume and intensify their activities? Do you think that Kabul (?will face the same situation as) Jalalabad?

[Najibullah] I think that gradually the commanders will conclude that this war is not a righteous and just war vis-a-vis the Afghan people. It is a war imposed by the Pakistanis.

At this very moment, we are receiving reports from various commanders inside the country, including those in the Kabul area and in Kabol Province. If anyone tries to attack on the instruction of Pakistani military intelligence when the weather improves, then not only will the Armed Forces and the patriotic party forces be on our side, but these commanders assure us they will also be on our side.

[Correspondent] Mr President, if you reflect and see that your national reconciliation policy has not been successful and you have not been able to (?hold) talks with opposition groups inside Afghanistan, do you think there can be a third way [words indistinct]?

[Najibullah] In reply to your question, let me briefly say that the national reconciliation policy is successful. You saw the opposition aroused by the convening of the shura in Pakistan. The eight-party alliance objected. The supporters of Zahir Shah objected. The commanders inside the country expressed objections. The refugees held demonstrations. They all returned in disappointment. I think this in itself is a profound reflection of the national reconciliation policy and the very principle for a political situation to events around Afghanistan.

[Correspondent] Well, [words indistinct] since you have put forward the proposal for national reconciliation the fighting still going on [words indistinct]?

[Najibullah] We have chosen peace and we have put forward particular proposals: from a cease-fire to the formation of a shura; from the formation of a coalition government to the drafting of a constitution and the holding of elections.

[Correspondent] Do you think that you would agree if this election (?were brought forward) and an organization such as the United Nations or a delegation composed of various countries selected by the United Nations were to supervise a free election in Afghanistan, especially in those regions which are under government control?

[Najibullah] We believe in free, nation-wide elections, on the basis of democratic principles and we are ready and prepared, provided that as a first step, a cease-fire is also secured by these international organizations because under the fire of weapons, artillery shells, and aircraft, a just and democratic election cannot be held.

[Correspondent] What would you think if peace in Afghanistan demanded your resignation and the removal of the ruling party?

[Najibullah] It is no exaggeration to say I have replied to this question a dozen times. Basically the resignation of this person or that person, this organization or that political organization, cannot solve the Afghan issue. It is high time now that we solve the issue of Afghanistan not through the removal of individuals, but by coming to terms with the forces. However, if peace were being restored in our homeland, we would not only be ready to leave our positions, but also to sacrifice our lives.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]?

[Najibullah] By observing our commitments in the Geneva accords, we have prepared the basis for the return of the limited units of the Soviet Union to their country. At the moment, there is not even a single Soviet soldier in the country, and Afghanistan is a free, independent, sovereign nation whose territorial integrity is intact. This question should be raised to the opposite side. As in the past 1 ½ centuries, when governments were being created in Lahor, a government is now being created in Rawalpindi under the supervision of Pakistani military intelligence. What answer do they have for the people of Afghanistan and public opinion?

[Correspondent] What role do you accept for Zahir Shah, ex-king of Afghanistan, in the search for peace in Afghanistan? In this connection, does he want the removal of the present government of Afghanistan?

[Najibullah] We accept an important role for all political personalities in the country who intend to serve the peace process in the country, including Muhammad Zahir, who can play a major role in realizing peace in the country and the formation of national unity.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] from Afghan personalities who are living abroad, is there anybody who can (?establish) contacts between you and the mujahidin?

[Najibullah] We have said time and again and will repeat once again that there are many capable Afghans, not only inside but also outside our country who think about and love their country, and they are Afghans and regard the interests of their country above everything else.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] when the present ruling party came to power in Afghanistan and then the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan. What do you think about the past incidents [words indistinct]?

[Najibullah] The past assessment of animosities, mistakes, and wrong actions, to a certain extent, can clear up the problems, but this cannot solve them. The best solution is to look forward and erase all past contradictions in accordance with genuine Afghan customs. We should start afresh to serve the people, restore peace in the country, and provide prosperity and tranquility for the people of Afghanistan.

[Correspondent] What do you think about the future of Afghanistan (?provided you remain) the leader of Afghanistan?

[Najibullah] We see the future of Afghanistan as free, independent, nonaligned, and committed, with the interest of friendship with all the countries of the world from East to West, with all neighboring countries, on the basis of good neighborliness and the principle of peaceful coexistence with all fraternal Muslim countries.

[Correspondent] (?What about your future, Mr President)?

[Najibullah] I have already said that if peace is being secured in my country, I am not only prepared for the question of my position but I am even ready to sacrifice my life.

[Correspondent] What role do you see for a country like India? Do you think that India can play a role?

[Najibullah] So far India has political weight, important status, and international credibility. India can play a positive role in the development of the situation in the region, in particular in connection with the issue of Afghanistan for the sake of traditional, friendly relations between Afghans and Indians. Due to the peaceful policy followed by India as well as the international credit, prestige, and authority enjoyed by India, this country can play a valuable role in the political solution of the Afghan situation.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]?

[Najibullah] I think the question of lack of unity in the party is mostly in the minds of Westerners. There is now unity and solidarity with total political awareness of the need to preserve national sovereignty, defend the homeland, defend the people, and defend the country's territorial integrity and independence. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan members are fighting heroically. They have a future in the success of the national reconciliation policy. They look to a future based on hope and victory.

[Correspondent] What is your reaction to the latest news, especially the allocation of the Afghan seat [in the Islamic Conference Organization (ICO)] to the majahidin and the news that the U.S. Administration is considering a review of its relations with Afghanistan [words indistinct]?

[Najibullah] In principle, the ICO should not have acted so quickly on the political solution of the Afghan issue. With this action and behavior it has prepared the ground for another direct military confrontation and a continuation of the war in Afghanistan, which undoubtedly will damage the authority, prestige, and credibility of this organization in the international arena. However, everyone must witness this. They should not forget that the fate of the Afghan peole cannot be determined in conference halls. The reality is that the Afghan people themselves will determine their own destiny. Rest assured that time will soon show that Afghanistan's future will belong to Afghanistan (?itself).

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]?

[Najibullah] We sincerely congratulate them and we send a message to them: They should no longer be the victims of the destructive war which has made them homeless. They should return to their country without fear and, together with their brothers inside the country, and rebuild their common home—Afghanistan. This idea is increasingly entering their minds and we hope that the return of our compatriots to their homeland will take place soon so we may achieve the sacred objectives of defending and rebuilding the country.

[Correspondent] Mr President, much thanks [words indistinct].

[Najibullah] Thank you. Good-bye.

Jalalabad Fighting Continues; 231 Rebels Killed

LD2203175989 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] An authorized source in the Republic of Afghanistan Armed Forces reported to the BIA's military section that during the last 24 hours the security situation in most regions of the country was normal. Despite rocket and other heavy weapons fire from extremists linked to Pakistan, civilian and Armed Forces loss of life was very small.

The report states that as a result of heavy weapons fire at Konduz city, one soldier and one civilian were killed and three local people were wounded. The report adds that the units and companies of the Republic of Afghanistan Armed Forces have sustaned the previous military situation and have achieved a series of successes in a number of other regions.

According to another report 20 opposition group members who were previously engaged in subversive activities around the Salang highway, joined local units of the Armed Forces bringing with them 15 light weapons and 2 rocket launchers.

Also 8 opposition armed group members, who were engaged in disrupting public order around the Sar-e Pol District, joined the state authorities bringing their weapons. Another 20-strong armed group which was engaged in armed activity in Shirin Tagab District, ceased fighting yesterday and joined the national reconciliation policy.

A report adds that Kabul-Hayratan highway is still secure and open to traffic. Yesterday 300 supply vehicles arrived in Kabul and many of them left Kabul for Hayratan.

In a separate report about the military situation in Jalalabad city, the source reports that missile and heavy weapons attacks from the rear of the enemy front by the Pakistani Armed Forces in Jalababad and its suburbs are continuing. According to reliable intelligence reports and eyewitnesses, which arrived from the rear of the enemy front, supply operations to the front ranks of the enemy is continuing by Divisions 11 and 18 of the Pakistani Army.

A joint attack by the Pakistani troops and extremist groups linked to them, which was supported with heavy rifle fire by Pakistan from the direction of Hada, was decisively foiled and the enemy was pushed back as a result of heroic resistance by the Afghan units and companies.

As a result of enemy heavy weapons fire, 10 Armed Forces members and residents were wounded and 1 auxillary depot was set on fire. During a retaliatory strike by the Afghan Armed Forces, 4 Saudi advisers, 7 Pakistani advisers and 4 extremist group commanders, including Ghulam Habib and Liwanay, as well as 231 enemy troops were killed and 53 were wounded. Also as a result of the strike, 3 enemy weapons and ammunition caches, 51 rocket launchers, 2 missiles, 2 BM-1 units, 4 trucks and 11 strongholds were destroyed.

Kabul Garrison Command Thwarts Rocket Attack

LD2103223489 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] Operational units of the Kabul city garrison command captured an assortment of 22 rockets including 3 (?Sakr-30) U.S. rockets today. The BAKHTAR military section reports that criminal Pakistani-backed extremists fired 13 (?Sakr-30) missiles on residential areas of Kabul and tried to overcome our compatriots who are engaged in preparing for New Year celebrations. This evil plan by the extremists was detected in time and was neutralized by the Kabul garrison command.

UN Notified of Pakistani 'Violations' 332-334

LD2203074489 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0439 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Kabul, March 21, BAKHTAR—Notices Number 332, 333 and 334 of the Republic of Afghanistan on violations by Pakistan of the provisions of the Geneva accords were submitted to the office of the UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan, UNGOMAP, (?here on) Monday.

Strict information on the existance of two military training camps in the territory of Pakistan, Ajram and Jagani areas, where extremists are trained in the use of armaments are given in the Notice Number 332.

In the Notices Number 333 and 334 totally 29 instances of Pakistani violations of the provisions of the Geneva accords during 3 days, March 16-19, are given.

The notices ask UNGOMAP that on the basis of para 7, Document Number 4 of the Geneva accords investigate the mentioned violations and convey results of its findings to the concerned sides immediately.

Bangladesh

President, Delegation Depart for Paris

BK2203125989 Dhaka Overseas Service in English 1230 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] President Ershad is now on way to Paris on a 3-day state visit to France. He is accompanied by Begum Raushan Ershad. Other members of the entourage include Foreign Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud and two members of Parliament. During the visit, President Ershad is expected to discuss bilateral issues, including French support for flood control in Bangladesh. International issues of common concern will also come up for discussion.

Norway To Fund Inland Water Transport Project

BK2203132189 Dhaka Overseas Service in English 1230 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Bangladesh is to receive over 160 million taka as grant from Norway under an agreement signed in Dhaka today. It will be used for implementation of various projects under the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority.

India

UK Act Against 'Indian Terrorists' in Force

BK2203125589 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] The British Government has assumed wider powers to deal with Indian terrorists operating from that country with a new antiterrorist act coming into force today. The act makes it an offense to solicit, receive, or accept contribution of money or other property in an attempt to support terrorism. It also gives powers to the home secretary to prohibit people from entering the country. Suspects can be detained up to 48 hours, and the period can be extended up to a further 5 days by the home secretary.

The new law also covers terrorism in Northern Ireland, as well as violence by other international extremist groups. A mechanism is also being established between the authorities in Britain and India to choke off terrorists funds allegedly raised in religious places in the United Kingdom.

Sri Lankan Northeastern Province Chief Visits

Wants LTTE in Peace Process

BK2103034889 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] The chief minister of the Northeastern Province of Sri Lanka, Mr Varadaraja Perumal, has said the peacekeeping force can be withdrawn from the province once an infrastructure is created to maintain law and order. Mr Perumal, who had a meeting with Indian authorities in New Delhi, told UNI that his government has decided to send an emissary to London to meet the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] leaders. He said his government was interested in involving the LTTE in the peace process.

Meets With Gandhi, Cabinet

BK2203112889 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] New Delhi sources said that Varadaraja Perumal, chief minister of the Northeastern Province, had concluded his discussions with Indian leaders. The spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry told newsmen that during his stay, Mr Perumal had met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and some of his Cabinet ministers. They included the external affairs minister, the minister of state for external affairs, the defense minister, and the finance minister.

The sources said that during the Indo-Sri Lanka joint commission meeting in September 1987, India had announced a grant of 250 million rupees for reconstruction and rehabilitation work in the province. India had already dispatched miscellaneous items, including buses, trucks, ambulances, utensils, bilingual printing press, generators, etc. The reports said that the remaining items were being identified in consultation with the Government of Sri Lanka.

Economic Projects Planned

BK2103125489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] The Indian Government is in the process of identifying projects and schemes to revive economic activity in the Northeastern Province of Sri Lanka. An External Affairs Ministry spokesman told newsmen in New Delhi that this would be in done in consultation with the Sri Lankan Government and the provincial government. The fund for this project will be from the 25 crore rupees grant announced by India in September 1987 for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the Northeastern Province. India pledged the 25 crore rupees assistance during the India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission meeting.

Violence Erupts in Kashmiri Border Town

BK2203160489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, curfew was imposed on the border town of Rajauri this afternoon following group clashes. Some persons were injured in gunshots and stone-pelting. The situation is reported tense but under control.

'Indefinite Curfew' Imposed

BK2303085589 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, indefinite curfew continues in border town of Rajauri. No untoward incident has been reported since yesterday evening.

Making a statement in the assembly today, the state agriculture minister, Mr Mohammad Shafi, said that Army and police patrolling is continuing in the city. He said clashes between two groups of people occurred when a traditional religious procession was being taken out in the city. Twelve persons were injured, one of them later succumbed to the injuries in the hospital.

Members from all parties expressed concern over the incident and demanded stern action against miscreants responsible for the trouble.

Army Deployed in Rajauri

BK2303084789 Hong Kong AFP in English 0839 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] New Delhi, March 23 (AFP)—Troops have been called out to enforce peace in India's northern frontier town of Rajauri after rioting left one person dead and 10 injured, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) reported Thursday.

The Army was called out shortly after mob violence erupted late Wednesday in Rajauri, in northern Jammu and Kashmir State, forcing police to fire warning shots, explode teargas shells and baton-charge arsonists, the news agency said.

Authorities clamped an indefinite curfew on the town after the violence, which left four policemen injured. Four of the six civilians in hospital were said to be in serious condition.

PTI did not say what caused or who was involved in the trouble. Rajauri has been the site of Hindu-Moslem rioting in the past.

Officials were quoted as saying that the situation in the town, nearly 180 kilometres (110 miles) from Jammu city and near the Pakistan border, was "under control" Thursday.

Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Moslem-majority state and the subject of a longstanding dispute between India and Pakistan, has in recent weeks witnessed violence blamed by authorities on pro-Pakistan Moslem fundamentalists which has left many injured.

SGPC Meets on Leadership Following Resignation

BK2303051489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0200 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] In Punjab, the acting president of the SGPC [Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee—Sikh Temple Management Committee], Mr Harinder Singh Tarn Tarani, has resigned from his post. An emergency meeting of the SGPC executive in Amritsar yesterday accepted Mr Tarn Tarani's resignation and appointed Mr Ujagar Singh Rangreta as acting president. The meeting also reinstated Mr Manjit Singh Calcutta as the secretary of the SGPC, who was sacked by the executives on the 17th of this month.

Iran

Khomeyni Sends Message to War Refugees

LD2203123989 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Message from Ayatollah Khomeyni to war refugees on the birthday of Mahdi, the hidden imam—read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. To the beloved sisters, brothers, and children of the refugees of the imposed war. May they be exalted by God.

With greetings to the sacred character of the one born on 22 March and the last reserve of the Imamate, his excellency the choice of God—may our souls be sacrificed for him—and the singular disseminator of justice, and the great emblem-carrier of mankind's emancipation from tyranny, arrogance, and injustice. Greetings to him and to those who truthfully await him. Greetings to his hiding and reappearance; and greetings to those who truthfully comprehend his reappearance and become infused with his wisdom and knowledge. Greetings to the great nation of Iran that paves the way for his reappearance with its sacrifices, selflessness, and martyrdom. Greetings to you sister and brother war refugees, who doubtless are among those who have suffered much material, mental, and physical damage due to the imposed war.

You dear ones, during Saddam's beastly onslaught and after days of heroic resistance, were forced to flee from your hearths and homes and have had to carry on your lives away from your homes. You dear refugees of the imposed war have experienced every single moment of the war and its difficulties. God willing, the Islamic Republic, in the not too distant future, will hand over your cities and villages to you, and in a state even better than before.

Nevertheless, you yourselves must help the officials and assist them in the task of reconstruction and rejuvenation of your cities and villages. Praise be to God, you young children have now become the youth who will defend their Islamic homeland, as did their brothers and sisters.

Everyone is aware that enduring 8 years of pressures and difficulties was solely for beloved Islam. Therefore, the officials, in the defense of Islam, must stand more firmly than ever against the world-devourers' military, political, and cultural aggression. This is because today the arrogant powers, particularly the West, now understand the danger that the resurgent true Islam of Muhammad—peace on him and his scion—poses to their illegitimate goals. Today East and West are well aware that the only force which can eliminate them from the stage is Islam. During the 10 years of Iran's Islamic revolution, they have suffered heavy blows from Islam and have decided to destroy Islam in Iran—the center of pure Muhammadan Islam—by any means available and if possible with military power. Should that fail they will resort to spreading their state culture and try to alienate the nation from Islam and from its national culture. Should all these fail, they will try to help their hireling elements infiltrate offices and centers, in order to reach their inauspicious goals. These hirelings include the liberals, the hypocrites [Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] and the irreligious people who can kill the clergy and innocent people as easily as they drink water. The words of these infiltrating agents are being constantly repeated by gullible but well-meaning people.

I have repeatedly announced that I have not formed a fraternity bond with anyone, regardless of their positions. The framework of my friendship is formed by the degree of righteousness of each individual's path. Defense of Islam and Hezbollah is the indisputable principle of existence of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We must defend those people whose heads were severed by the hyprocrites as they sat with their wives and children at the Ramadan sunset meal. We must be the steadfast enemy of those whose documents of collusion with the United States emerged out the nest of spies [U.S. Embassy in Tehran]. We must devote all our love to God, not to history.

Those who defend the liberals and hyprocrites are facing a deadend situation before our beloved martyr-nurturing nation. If the elements of foreign powers or the deceived ignorant people who inadvertently become others' mouthpieces do not curtail their actions, our people will reject them with no mercy. Our officials must realize that our revolution is not tied to Iran. The Iranian people's revolution was the starting point for the great revolution of the Islamic world, under the emblem of his excellency the hidden imam—may our souls be sacrificed for him. May God bestow this blessing on all Muslims and the people of the world, and may his appearance and mission take place within our era.

If economic and material issues distract officials from their tasks, this will lead to a great danger and horrific treason. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran must use all its might and ability to better manage people's affairs. But this does not mean that the government should be complacent in carrying out the great objective of the revolution, in establishing an Islamic world state.

The dear people of Iran—who are certainly the illuminated image of the great history of Islam during the contemporary era—must try to endure difficulties and pressures for the sake of God, so that the country's top officials can carry out their main task: to spread Islam throughout the world. They should ask them to consider fraternity and sincerity only within the framework of the interests of Islam and the Muslims.

Who is it that does not know that our dear people are going through hard times and that high prices and shortages exact a toll from the deprived classes? But also there is no one who does not know that to turn one's back on the culture of today's vile world and to lay the foundations for a new culture based on Islam in the world, and to decisively confront the United States and the Soviet Union, consequently incurs pressure, hardship, martyrdom, and hunger. And our people have themselves chosen this path; and they will also pay the price for it and are proud of it. It is clear that breaking the culture of the West and the East is not effective without martyrdom. I ask once again that the high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic's system should not fear anything or anyone except Almighty God, and that they should tighten their belt and not relinquish struggle and jihad against the corruption and vulgarity of Western capitalism and the futility and aggression of communism, as we are still in the preliminary stages of the global struggle against the West and the East.

What is the worst thing that can happen to us? Will we appear to suffer defeat from the world-devourers and be destroyed? Will the world accuse us of brutality and backwardness? Will they trample underfoot the glory of Islam and Muslims through the infiltration of their perverted and murderous agents, in homes and other places? Will the dear children of Muhammadan Islam throughout the world go to the gallows? Will Hezbollahi women and young children in the world be arrested? Let the vile, material world behave like this toward us while we do our Islamic duty. Today, more than ever, the resentment and enmity of global arrogance against Muhammadan Islam is evident.

Their general mobilization in defending a sold-out mercenary author is indicative of this reality, and perhaps they had not forseen that they would be so ashamed and humiliated in order to arrive at their sinister goal; otherwise, they would not have returned today with such shame, abjectness, and disgrace, regretting their deed. [Tehran IRNA in English at 1110 GMT on 22 March in a report on Khomeyni's message, notes that these remarks refer to the return of European Community ambassadors to Tehran]

Quite probably, the question of preventing Muslim women from wearing the veil in educational establishments is a distorted move aimed at undermining the great glory of the world of Islam to defend the blessed prophet—may God's peace and benedictions be upon him and his scion. This incident itself is among the problems which Islamic nations have had to cope with. Thus, in the so-called free world, forcing Muslim women and girls not to wear the veil is democracy itself. We are the only ones who said: If anyone should insult the prophet of Islam—may God's peace be upon him and his scion—the consensus of opinion of Islamic jurisconsults issues on edict ordering his execution. They say this is against freedom!

Truly, why is the world silent in the face of someone who does not allow Muslim girls to wear their Islamic attire and study or research in the universities if they want to? Does this signify anything but that the meaning and interpretation of freedom and its use are at the disposal of those who oppose the principle of holy freedom? Today, we must struggle against complacency, passivity, and silence, and maintain the fervor of the revolution's movement.

I say again that all the responsible officials of the system and the people of Iran should realize that the East and the West will not rest until they make you abandon your Islamic identity. What a futile dream! Neither become pleased with having ties with aggressors, nor become upset over severing relations with them. Always face the enemies alertly and with your eyes wide open. Do not let them feel complacent, for they would not leave you in peace for even a moment.

Of course, we are greatful to the Foreign Ministry for its efforts; they should continue their task seriously. God willing, they will be successful in performing their great divine and political duty.

I beseech Almighty God to return our dear refugees to their homes and dwellings as soon as possible, so that the bitterness of homelessness and hardship turns into the sweetness of home-coming. In conclusion, I deem it necessary to praise and thank all those who have looked after the dear refugees of the imposed war and are continuing to do so, and also thank the esteemed officials of the War Refugees' Foundation, who have worked very hard. May God's peace and mercy be upon you all.

[Signed] Ruhollah al-Musavi al-Khomeyni

[Dated] 22 March 1989

Turkish Envoy Summoned Over Ban on Veiling
LD2203102589 Tehran IRNA in English 1016 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Tehran, March 22, IRNA—The Foreign Ministry summoned Turkish Ambassador Omer Akbel Tuesday, voicing Iran's concern over the Ankara government's ban on the hijab (Islamic dress) in Turkish universities.

The Foreign Ministry's director-general for West Asian Affairs, Ebrahim Rahim-Pur informed Akbel of a protest note signed by 150 Majlis deputies against Ankara's decision to prevent girl students from wearing Islamic dress at universities. He also urged Ankara to lift the restrictions on female students.

The Turkish constitutional court has banned the hijab upon a request by President Kenan Evren, overturning a decision of the Higher Education Committee to allow girl student to wear the traditional chador and head scarves at universities.

In related news, the Propagation Bureau of the Qom Theological School issued a statement Tuesday strongly condemning Ankara's "anti- Islamic plot" and voicing support for growing Islamic movements in Turkey.

The statement, terming the Turkish Government's ban on the Hijab as an "anti-Islamic act in line with global arrogance's schemes against the sanctities of Muslims," urged the government to revise its economic and trade agreements with Ankara.

It also reminded that such a blatant aggression against human dignities and Islamic sanctities by the Turkish Government was timed with Ankara's refusal to seriously condemn the publication of Salman Rushdie's blasphemous novel "The Satanic Verses."

Khamene'i Receives Armed Forces Personnel
LD2103113989 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Mar 89

[Text] On the occasion of the New Year and the feast of Nowruz the commanders of the three branches of the Armed Forces and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, the Gendarmerie, the police, and other Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran met this morning with Mr Khamene'i, chairman of the Supreme Defense Council.

According to a Central News Unit report, Mr Khamene'i voiced his New Year's congratulations and addressed the Armed Forces personnel, saying: In the past year, our people have sacrificed their lives and possessions and have successfully passed a great and valuable test. Now, in this existing climate of peace-making, by relying on past experiences we must build the future this nation deserves.

The president added: Our revolution was not given to bargaining or compromise. Benefitting from the lofty humanistic sacrifices, it has conducted an onslaught to defend values against all unprincipled systems. The chairman of the Supreme Defense Council referred to the freedom of mankind in the world, and said: In international law, the freedom of an individual has been respected, but it can be seen that the British Government and global colonialism humiliated our nation for 200 years, plundered our great material and spiritual resources and our proud history, and did not consider that our nation had any rights whatsoever. Our revolution was an uprising against this 200 years of injustice, to the point that today our policy in international relations is one of an attack against all unprincipled positions and a defense of all the deprived nations of the world.

In conclusion, the president referred to the Armed Forces' role, saying: The Armed Forces and the Guards Corps are not forces that duplicate each other. Rather, separate objectives have been set down for them in the Constitution. These two forces together form a complete armed force for the defense of the Islamic revolution's values. Today, a very good move has been made by the General Staff Command of the Armed Forces toward uniting them. We hope that these forces will be successful and victorious in reconstruction, just as they were in battle.

Lebanon's Sha'ban Meets Khamene'i in Mashhad

NC2303071089 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, leader of Lebanon's Islamic Unification Movement, met and talked with our president, Mr Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, in the auditorium of the holy shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad last night.

The Central News Unit reports that during this meeting, which was also attended by Foreign Minister Mr Velayati, Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban expressed his happiness over the meeting and thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its sincere support for the Muslims of Lebanon. Praising the Islamic religious decree issued by the imam of the ummah on the author of "The Satanic Verses," he referred to the retreat by world arrogance on this issue and said: The decisive position and decree by his holiness the imam is the decree of all Islamic jurists; this victory is nothing less than a victory in war because the principles of war include the preservation of Islamic sanctities and values.

In conclusion, Mr Khamene'i thanked the leader of Lebanon's Islamic Unification Movement for these remarks and emphasized the need for the unity of all Lebanon's Muslim forces.

* Danger of 'Political Radicalism' Examined

WA2303184089 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 8 Feb 89 p 2

[Text] A great deal of criticism has been heaped upon the 2-day visit to Tehran of French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas who left Tehran on Monday after what he termed "very fruitful talks" with Iranian officials. But noises have emerged in some domestic quarters including the hard-line wing represented by Interior Minister Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, heaping criticism on the wisdom of the visit. The main theme of their objection revolves around what they see as "Paris's unqualified support for Iraq in the course of the latter's war against the Islamic Republic."

It appears now that the existence of several decisionmaking bodies in the country has placed many a snag in the way to the consolidation of the nation's new political strategy.

Aren't the first 10 turbulent years of the Islamic Revolution enough for us to apply an adequate dose of experience to our political moves today?

Many high-ranking officials have explicitly in recent months said that our foreign policy of the past years has contributed in no small measure to the increase in the number of our adversaries at regional and international levels. Our not-too-wise-maneuverings in the past, they hold, has caused us to end up in what comes close to disastrous political isolation.

A revolution's foreign policy, however, should not become an area for political jousting by irresponsible people. If not prevented, such joustings will only undermine international confidence in our moves.

Perhaps Mr Mohtashemi should be reminded that the adoption of the nation's foreign political strategy is closely monitored by the leader of the Revolution who, on numerous occasions, has noticed and drawn attention to such negative trends.

Let us all also remember that when Foreign Minister Velayati offered his resignation a few months ago, the Imam personally supported the ministry's operations and asked him to stay on. It is also to be remembered that before Iran's acceptance of Resolution 598, at a time when Mr Mohtashemi was recommending a "20-year-war strategy" to the Foreign Ministry, the Imam called on the cabinet ministers not to intervene in one another's lines of activity.

But it appears, regrettably though, that in spite of the Imam's oft-repeated guidelines, some officials are still very much interested in getting involved in the country's foreign policy, a thing which is not their sphere.

For a fact, political radicalism can raise serious threats to the course of the Islamic Revolution in years to come.

If we are to follow the recommendations of radicals in shaping our foreign policy, we should not expect any improvement in our foreign relations both at regional and international levels. The reason is there were many countries which sided with Iraq in its unjust war against the Islamic Republic.

But let's also remember that as Speaker Hashemi-Rafsanjani puts it, our performance in foreign policy has been conducive to the taking of such stances by those countries. Is it not time for us to also criticize ourselves? Otherwise we will have to sever our ties with half of the world's nations. Naturally it is not in our interest. We have already tasted the fruits of isolation. Do we need to again?

AL-QABAS Cited on Relations with UK

LD2203143689 Tehran IRNA in English 1430 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Kuwait, March 22, IRNA—A British official reiterated that London had no connection with the publication of Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses".

In an interview published by the Kuwaiti daily AL-QABAS Wednesday Foreign Office Minister for Middle East Affairs William Waldgrave admitted that the novel had deeply hurt Muslim sentiments. He said the British Government never tried to ignore the fact that "The Satanic Verses" was offensive to Muslims.

He also blamed the current tension in Tehran-London relations on what he termed as the "radical" faction in Iran which he said was against normal ties with the West.

In a separate article AL-QABAS said Monday's decision of the European community to allow the return ambassadors to Tehran was a "severe set-back" for the Britain. Britain would be the only member of the 12-nation EC which cannot return its diplomats to Tehran because of the Iranian Majlis move to break off ties with London.

AL-QABAS, quoting Western diplomats, said the EC member states were actually trying not to let the issue mar their political and economic ties with the Islamic Republic.

Commentary Lauds EEC, Derides UK Over 'Verses'

LD2203211289 Tehran in English to Europe 1950 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Unattributed political commentary entitled: "The British Government Continues Its Machinations"]

[Text] The (?valid) wise decision of the EEC, which saw through the political game of Mrs Thatcher's government in time, has confronted London with a political predicament.

Acting like a politically inexperienced regime, the British Government, which has entangled itself with numerous domestic problems, tries to cover up the inefficiency of the Tories by setting the European countries against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Repeated train collisions in a country which was once the most industrially advanced country in the world; recurrent failures of the British security services in connection with detection of IRA activities—the latest of which was witnessed following the murder of two ranking police officers; the Thatcher government's failure in selling Japanese cars, made in England, to France; drastic reductions in the research budgets of the British universities; and to crown it all, the growing increase of interest and construction loan rates [as heard], which has subjected hundreds of thousands of Englishmen to back-breaking problems; and finally the unprecedented failure of Downing Street in the Islamic Conference ministerial meeting in Riyadh have combined to isolate Mrs Thatcher's government in a manner which defies precedence in recent years.

London's rash action in supporting the book, "The Satanic Verses," has not only angered over 2 million Muslims residing in England, but it has also endangered Britain's political and probably economic standing in the Islamic world.

The British have always boasted to the superpowers that they have historic experiences about the world of Islam and Buckingham Palace [as heard] has even convinced the White House that it should enter the Middle East via London.

Needless to say, one of the reasons for this claim has been Britain's colonialist and expansionist role in the region for over three centuries. Nevertheless, the performance of Mrs Thatcher and Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe in the Salman Rushdie controversy has been so awkward that heads of Arab states in the Persian Gulf region have rendered a chilly welcome to England's crown prince in the past few days and the political missions of Britain in the Indian Subcontinent have been attacked for the first time in recent years.

The Muslim people in the Persian Gulf region, who have become aware of London's anti-Islamic plot, have put their governments under pressure to react to London's offensive remarks which have insulted Islam, the holy Koran and the prophet of Islam.

The arrogant Englishmen, who once used to challenge to a duel anyone who omitted to use the title of sir before their name, have now realized that Paris, Bonn, Athens, Amsterdam, and other European capitals have seen through them and have learned objectively that Downing Street not only makes plots for the Third World but also tries, as in the past, to make mischief between Muslims and European countries, because Muslims of the world have come to know the [word indistinct] nature of London.

In this connection the British Government is uttering lies and distorting facts in the hope of deceiving Western governments one more time. We advise world governments to learn about the Islamic Republic of Iran's views regarding their countries directly from the Islamic Republic of Iran's embassies and mass media, so that Downing Street will not find a chance to hatch another plot like the previous ones with its distortions.

The British Government is not willing to believe that London must pay for its insults to Islam. It is true that Imam Khomeyni has taken the initiative, from the position of a great religious leader, to proclaim the views of the Islamic 'ulema regarding the necessity of Salman

Rushdie's death. It is also true that by calling Salman Rushdie an apostate, the foreign ministers of the Islamic countries have confirmed the imam's decree to be both political and religious.

But Downing Street should know that it is not only the Islamic Republic of Iran which it must deal with; it should in fact answer to 46 Islamic countries.

Of course, Islamic laws will be decisively enforced regarding the Islam's enemies and the spies who have hatched plots against an Islamic and revolutionary government.

However, London must know that it is not only the 50 million people of Iran that have been made indignant by the insults of Downing Street, but that today 1 million Muslims are shouting for a crushing response to Mrs Thatcher's government.

ETTELA'AT Editorial Complains of High Prices

NC2203171589 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 15 Mar 89 pp 1, 4

[Editorial entitled: "High Prices and Minimum Expectations"—from the "Talk of the Day" series]

[Text] There can be different ways of tackling the unbridled rise in prices. Of course, we can stress a hundred times that action is far more preferable to reaction, despite the fact that we have the habit of waiting until problems proliferate, take root, and then envelop us instead of approaching them ourselves! We always wait until that point so that our only recourse is reaction rather than action!

In any case, we can reduce prices, at least outwardly, in the short term, by increasing imports. Therefore, by increasing supply, we can lower prices in the competitive market. However, this is the same solution that the Pahlavi regime resorted to after the 28 Mordad coup and especially in the years following the 15 Khordad uprising in the heyday of the superficial prosperity of OPEC when by flooding the country with imports, it was discovered that it proved cheaper to import products than to build from scratch a system which demanded an internal economy, domestic industry, and agriculture. Thusm the outcome was insolvency and the country's total dependence, the blows of which we suffered greatly after the revolution.

The other recourse would be to increase domestic production and thus remedy the malady. This solution is not impossible, but in itself, it is a mere grafting procedure. Irregular emigration has broken the weave of the fabric, and instead the texture has been woven with two deciding factors of oil and foreign exchange, making the situation more chaotic everyday.

We should distribute all things evenly so that whatever we have is given equally to everyone. This requires total planning and programming, courage, coordination, and a centralized command. It also requires an administrative and executive network that is capable, intelligent, and bereft of greed. In short, it requires many other instruments and levers which are apparently in short supply or nonexistent.

We do not wish to sing litanies of pessimism. All these things are feasible and attainable, but if a government—whether for legitimate or illegitimate reasons—does not wish to tread the path of increased imports, nor of the rectification of the system of distribution, nor of greater production to the extent necessary or in the manner desired, then not much can be achieved. Therefore, there should be a correct and just judicial system, and it should maintain its position.

The government can, along with the merciless drug smugglers, make the economic bandits face the wall and fire bullets of justice at them! At least it will dispel the people's doubts, and no one will feel the administration has billions and is trampling in all directions like the Mongols and destroying everything. We have made many threats of action in the past; at least once we can make them materialize!

Pakistan

Scientist Says Nuclear Reactor Capability Achieved

BK2303102789 Lahore JANG in Urdu 14 Mar 89 p 1

[Text] Islamabad—Pakistan has the capability to build nuclear reactors to meet its energy requirements. Whenever the government asks for it, we will fulfill this obligation. This was stated by the eminent scientist, Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, while talking to a JANG correspondent at a function when his attention was drawn to the fact that the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other developed countries have shown no interest in providing a nuclear reactor to Pakistan even after issuing an international request in this regard. Replying to a question on whether the reactor can be completed in 10 years, Dr Qadeer Khan said that we will build the reactor well before the estimated time.

Prime Minister Bhutto Expands Federal Cabinet

BK2303040389 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] The federal cabinet has been expanded, and Begum Nusrat Bhutto [mother of Benazir Bhutto] will be the senior minister without portfolio. The portfolios of some ministers have also been reshuffled. The names of ministers and their portfolios are as follows:

Mr Syed Ghulam Iftikhar Shah	minister for education
Ms Shehnaz Wazir Ali	minister of state for education
Ms Rehana Sarwar	minister of state for women's division
Mr Zafar Leghari	minister for railways
Mr Farooq K. Azam	minister of state for railways
Mr Ali Nawaz Shah	minister for industries
Mr Ahmad Sayeed Awan	minister of state for industries
Mr Mohammad Hanif Khan	minister for housing and construction
Mr Mushtaq Awan	minister of state for housing and construction
Mr Khan Bahadur Khan	minister for religious affairs
Haji Amanullah	Minister of state for religious affairs
Dr Mahbubur Rahman	minister of state for food, agriculture and cooperatives
Mr Tariq Maqsi	minister of state for labor and manpower
Mr Tariq Rahim	minister for parliamentary affairs
Dr Sher Afghan	minister of state for parliamentary affairs
Mr Zafar Ali Shah	minister of state for water and power
Dr Mahmuda Shah	minister of state for special education and social welfare
Begum Khaqwani	minister of state for population welfare
Mr Parvez Ali Shah	minister for youth affairs
Father Julius	minister of state for minority affairs
Mr Shah Nawaz Junejo	minister of state for local bodies and rural development
Mr Muzaffar Shah	minister of state for narcotics
Mr Yousuf Raza Gilani	minister for tourism
Mr Chowdhury Qadir Bux Milap	minister of state for sports
Mr Baz Mohammad Khan Khitran	minister for states and frontier regions
Mr Syed Qasim Ali Shah	minister of state for environment and civic affairs

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Punjab Chief Meets Bhutto, Attends Luncheon

BK2203153989 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Punjab Chief Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif called on Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto in Rawalpindi today. The meeting, which lasted for more than 2 hours, was followed by a luncheon hosted by the prime minister.

Later, talking to reporters, the Punjab chief minister said that they exchanged views on national issues. He described his talks with the prime minister as good. He said that the Pakistan People's Party and the Islamic Democratic Alliance can work for the people's welfare while adhering to their respective constitutions.

Iranian Air Force Commander Meets With Bhutto

LD2303100189 Tehran IRNA in English 0837 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] Islamabad, March 23, IRNA—Air Force Commander Brigadier General Mansur Sattari currently visiting Pakistan, met with Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto here Wednesday evening.

Sattari briefed Mrs. Bhutto on his tour of Pakistani Air Force bases and talks with Pakistani military officials. He also called for expansion of bilateral relations.

Sattari who arrived here Saturday heading a delegation is to attend a parade marking the Pakistani national day today.

President Receives Bahraini Information Minister

JN2203145389 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1250 GMT 2 Mar 89

[Text] Islamabad, 22 Mar (WAKH)—Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan met in Islamabad today with Bahraini Information Minister 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mu'ayyad who is currently visiting Pakistan.

Al-Mu'ayyad conveyed to the Pakistani president the greetings of His Highness Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain, and his best wishes of realizing further cooperation in all areas in order to enhance the distinguished relations existing between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by Jabbar Javed, Pakistani minister of state for information and broadcasting; Dr Halah al-'Umran, assistant under secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; Shaykh Rashid ibn Khalifah Al Khalifah, assistant under secretary for tourism and ruins affairs; and Muhammad Mudaffar, Bahraini charge d'affaires in Pakistan.

The Bahraini information minister also met with the Pakistani Senate Chairman Wasim Sajjad.

The meeting was attended by the Pakistani minister of state for information and broadcasting as well as the delegation accompanying the Bahraini information minister.

Bahraini Information Minister Tariq 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mu'ayyad arrived in Karachi yesterday on an official visit of several days to Pakistan at the invitation of Javed Jabbar, Pakistani minister of state for information and broadcasting.

During the visit, Al-Mu'ayyad will hold talks with his Pakistani counterpart on bolstering and enhancing the information cooperation between the two countries. He will also review with Pakistani officials the domains of cultural and touristic exchange between the two countries.

Ishaq Khan Delivers National Day Message 23 Mar

BK2303045789 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] The nation celebrates Pakistan Day today with a renewed determination to strengthen the new democracy reinstated in the country and to maintain the supremacy of the Constitution. In his message on this occasion, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan said there cannot be any other significant reason to celebrate Pakistan Day with pomp and gaiety other than taking a fresh pledge to transform into reality the dreams of those who sacrificed their lives in granting our country to us. The president urged the nation to sincerely put the national capabilities to work to realize the objectives for which the nation was founded and not to waste those capabilities on unconstructive purposes. He said today is a day of great happiness, but it is also a day to reaffirm our determination to fulfill the objectives and ideologies of the freedom movement, and the importance of the nation to us.

The president recalled that Pakistan came into being as a result of the struggle for democracy, and, therefore, democracy is embedded in our veins. Only by strengthening true democracy will the nation be prosperous and alive. He stressed the need to fully respect the democratic values of mutual understanding and tolerance and to sincerely implement the democratic principles of respecting the aspirations and the views of the people. The president said we should not also forget that the enforcement of the Islamic system in the country is the desire of the Muslims. As a nation, Islam is our identity and our welfare is in it.

Addresses National Day Parade

BK2303093489 Islamabad Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Excerpt] Pakistan Day is being celebrated throughout the country today. A grand joint services parade was held at the Race Course Grounds in Rawalpindi this morning. President Ghulam Ishaq Khan took the salute and reviewed the parade. The prime minister, Ms Benazir Bhutto, also witnessed the parade.

Addressing the parade, the president urged the nation for a fresh pledge to work unitedly for the country's security, stability, and supremacy. The nation should resolve to foil the designs of the enemy and stand by their valiant armed forces at the time of trial to make the country's defense impregnable. The president reminded the nation that adoption of the Pakistan Resolution 49 years ago reflected determination of the Muslims of South Asia to achieve a separate nationhood in consonance with their aspirations, religious beliefs, ideological requirements, historical traditions, and cultural heritage. This goal was achieved by the nation under the dynamic leadership of Qaid-I-Azam [Muhammad Ali Jinnah] in the face of untold sacrifices, trials, and tribulations.

Turning to recent restoration of democracy in the country, the president reminded the nation of the need to keep alive the spirit of democracy and its requirements. With the restoration of democracy, they have taken only one step toward the goal of Pakistan's creation.They have to keep up their efforts toward this goal, which is the creation of a progressive and prosperous society, based on the sovereignty of Allah and democracy with justice and fair play in every walk of life. They have also to prove to the rest of the world that they have not become complacent and are determined as ever for the second stage of their goal.

A magnificent flypast by the Air Force squadrons made the parade go with diving [word indistinct] in the salute. It included F-16's, Mirage, F-6, and A-5 fighter aircraft. Various regiments, which included the Punjab Regiment, the Baluch Regiment, the Frontier Corps, the Azad Kashmir Regiment, the Sind Regiment, and the special services groups as well as the Navy and the Air Force contingents marched past. It was followed by mechanized column which included tanks and [passage indistinct].

The Punjab governor, General, retired, Tikka Khan, took the salute and reviewed the parade. The provincial chief minister, Mian Nawaz Sharif, and his cabinet members were also present. [passage omitted]

MUSLIM Analyzes Bhutto's Performance

BK2203112589 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 13 Mar 89 pp 1, 6

[Maleeha Lodhi's "News Analysis" entitled: "Hundred Days of the Bhutto Government"]

[Text] Islamabad, March 12—"The Bhutto government has done nothing significant in its first 100 days; it lacks an agenda to show it has a policy programme for the future", says a critic. "The government," explains a supporter, "has got off a slow start because it wants to move cautiously, carefully considering every step before taking another". While some people praise the young government for not rushing into measures, others criticise it on the same score, pointing to the administration's inability to make bold departures.

Such contrasting views seem to have missed the significance of what the government has managed to do and what Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto clearly saw as her first, and in her own words, "most important task":—political liberalisation and democratisation. Her government's early steps were aimed at dismantling the depressing legacy of authoritarian rule and dispelling the claustrophobic atmosphere associated with that.

Within days of assuming power it took swift steps to make Pakistan a much freer country. These steps included the release of political prisoners, removing the ban on labour and student unions, restoring press freedom, ending the official blacklist of anti-establishment writers, poets and intellectuals and allowing the opposition access to the electronic media.

These steps sent important signals. Setting political prisoners free reflected the new government's position that it did not believe in jailing political opponents—a practice followed by both military and civilian regimes in the past. Opening up television and radio to the opposition was another departure. This too conveyed an important message: recognition of the legitimacy and role of an opposition. In a country where such a notion has rarely found acceptance, with both military and civilian regimes in the past, this has spelt no small change.

All of these steps enabled the new government to demonstrate that it did not just regard democracy as a slogan. They also helped create a political environment of greater freedom and openness. Indeed the noise over the government's handling of several incidents and issues as well as a lively parliamentary opposition was evidence of a functioning democracy. In putting the Eighth Constitutional Amendment early on the public agenda, the government was again, demonstrating its concern with democratisation and with undoing its authoritarian inheritance. But it also underscored the constraints stemming from not having the kind of parliamentary majority that would allow the government to scrap such amendments or indeed pass legislation quickly.

This was not the only constraint on the Bhutto government. The Prime Minister herself acknowledged a variety of constraints when she said "We've come into office circumscribed constitutionally, politically, economically and structurally."

Among the political constraints were a non-PPP [Pakistan People's Party] President with wide ranging powers (endorsed by the Eighth Amendment), and a military accustomed to wielding power in a country it has ruled for almost two-thirds of its existence. Then there was the constraint built into the electoral verdict—an opposition-controlled provincial government in Punjab.

In its first 100 days in office, the Bhutto government sought to establish its authority in this environment of constraints and to test the limits of that authority. In doing so, it kept having to deal with the widespread public perception that the new government was only one element in a troika of power that also comprised the President and the Army Chief.

The tone of caution that became the government's hallmark in its early months seemed to have been urged by the kind of constraints Ms Bhutto alluded to. As she herself explained "We are moving cautiously so as not to ruffle feathers, to permit people to know us. Our first step is to build confidence, moving in a way that is absorbed by the key elements within the elite structures." Conscious that she is dealing with a political establishment including a powerful bureaucracy, that remains suspicious of her party, Prime Minister Bhutto opted for gradualism.

But this approach has also been accompanied by assertions of authority in key areas. Examples range from her decision to transfer political intelligence-gathering functions undertaken in the past by the powerful ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence] to the Intelligence Bureau, setting up a special committee to review the working of the country's intelligence agencies, to a discreet, but timely intervention on the Afghan issue during the deliberations of the Shura last month.

Nevertheless the first 100 days made it clear that a major challenge that confronted the Prime Minister is to strike a balance between meeting her supporters' desire for change while maintaining a degree of policy continuity to satisfy the country's traditional power brokers—a balancing act that is by no means easy.

The most debilitating constraint on the Bhutto govenrment's room to manoeuvre, however, was evident in the economic realm. Having inherited an official economy in shambles, the government faced the tough task of tackling the huge budgetary and balance of payments deficits and restoring financial stability to an economy ruined by long years of mismanagement and unbridled government spending without accompanying efforts to raise new revenue.

How much this limited the government's options was illustrated by the "revised" budget it presented in December. Although this came within a few weeks of assuming power, it substantially resembled the original budget except that cuts in development spending were made to balance the books. The cuts also reflected the PPP concern to check inflation.

The government also found its hands tied by the IMF agreement bequeathed to it by the predecessor regime. While providing much needed resources ($813 million over three years, the first tranche of $377 million having been received in early January) the IMF deal entails painful adjustments in every sector of the economy. From the outset this presented the new government with the challenge of having to walk a thin line between popular expectations and the economic constraints imposed by what is essentially an austerity programme. The recent riots and unrest in Venezuela is the most recent and vivid reminder of the political and social costs of imposing such a programme.

Prime Minister Bhutto cites efforts to come to grips with the fiscal deficit as an example of her government's attempt to tackle a major problem area in its first few months in power. The budget in June will be the first real test of these efforts. Meanwhile the government's declared intention to widen the tax base, to begin examining ways of boosting foreign investment, converting short term debt into medium and long term, as well as draw up tentative plans to privatize state-run enterprise (starting perhaps with utilities and telecommunications) all signify a strategy that is a departure from the ad hoc economic decision-making which characterised the Zia years. Such a strategy-in-the-making does indicate an ability to think and act long term. However it is still far too early to assess the government's economic performance.

On the external front, the new government generated enormous international goodwill. The long list of foreign dignitaries who visited Pakistan since Benazir Bhutto's assumption of office, was one manifestation of this. It is, however, too early to say whether and how the PPP government will capitalise on this goodwill in concrete diplomatic or material terms. Certainly as far as the US is concerned, there are indications that goodwill toward the new government is likely to translate into a Congressional waiver of the Symington Amendment, which will allow continuance of American military and economic assistance to Pakistan. Meanwhile, Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to Pakistan—the first ever by a Soviet foreign minister—with a message that Moscow wished to look beyond Afghanistan to improved bilateral ties, was also evidence of such goodwill.

Hosting the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation [SAARC] Summit in December also gave the new government's image an international boost, which PPP leaders themselves depict as something of a diplomatic triumph. More importantly, the SAARC summit provided an opportunity for the resumption of an Indo-Pakistan dialogue at summit level and the signing of three agreements which served as instruments for normalising relations between the two countries. The swift reduction of tensions with India can be credited to the PPP government. But on the domestic political front this brought mixed results since it provided the opposition with a handle to criticise the government and put it on the defensive.

Praise and goodwill for the Bhutto government from abroad contrasted with political troubles at home which the government itself portrayed as efforts to destabilise it. In handling a string of such troubles (from the Baluchistan assembly dissolution to the Islamabad firing) and crises, the inexperience and weakness of the PPP's team of ministers was exposed. In Parliament this inexperience often put the government at the receiving end and enabled the opposition to constantly wrongfoot the treasury benches. With a few notable exceptions this lack-lustre team of PPP ministers have so far been unable to create an image of competence. Most seem to have been unable to make the mental transition from opposition to government; their rhetoric and behaviour suggesting a preference for politics over administration. Few have managed to concentrate on work in their respective ministries much less come to grips with their portfolios.

The appointment and reliance on a crowd of advisors itself reflected the inadequacy of the ministerial team. But it also earned considerable criticism on the grounds that non-elected individuals had been given too much power, undermining the principle of representative government. The appearance of courtiers, old and new, also provoked adverse comment.

But despite the induction of advisors to bolster a weak cabinet team, the tendency within the PPP government has still been an over-reliance on a single individual for decision making.

Political energies of ministers and advisors alike have been consumed in the ongoing tussle with the Nawaz Sharif-led Punjab Government—a tussle that has dominated the domestic political scene in recent weeks.

Regardless of whether the PPP was sucked into a confrontation of Nawaz Sharif's making or it is one which the PPP initiated, the risk now is that if the Chief Minister is ousted this may be deemed in public perception as unwillingness on the PPP's part to tolerate a political opponent.

On the other hand there is the imperative for a smooth working relationship with the government of the country's largest province. Trade offs may be involved in dealing with this issue but the PPP must resist making any moves that erode the principle of governing by consensus.

Any move that is seen as a throwback to the PPP's monopolistic attitude to power in the'70s could damage its democratic credentials in the'80s.